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The SPHERE, London, July 18, 1942

THE SPHERE

With which is incorporated "THE GRAPHIC"

The Empire's Illustrated Weekly

THE SECOND IN COMMAND OF THE MEDITERRANEAN FLEET WITH THE SUBMARINE COMMANDER WHO HAS JUST BEEN AWARDED THE V.C.: VICE-ADMIRAL SIR HENRY PRIDHAM-WIPPELL WITH COMMANDER MIERS, V.C., D.S.O. (ON RIGHT), ON THE DECK OF H.M. SUBMARINE "TORBAY"

On July 7 it was announced that Commander Anthony Cecil Capel Miers, D.S.O., had been awarded the Victoria Cross, "for valour in command of H.M. Submarine *Torbay*, in a daring and successful raid on shipping in a defended enemy harbour, planned with full knowledge of the great hazards to be expected during seventeen hours in waters closely patrolled by the enemy." His award was the forty-third of the war, and the thirteenth to go to the Royal Navy. During the past year in the Mediterranean, the *Torbay* has sunk or damaged 70,000 tons of shipping—including twenty-two ships sunk by shellfire. Commander Miers took over command of *Torbay* towards the end of 1940: three months later he was mentioned in despatches; in October he was awarded the D.S.O.; in April of this year he received a Bar to the D.S.O. Recently the submarine was visited by the Second-in-Command of the Mediterranean Fleet, Vice-Admiral Sir H. Pridham-Wippell, and by Rear-Admiral Sir Philip Vian: the officers and crew were then congratulated on their fine achievements. The picture above was taken during the Admiral's inspection. *Torbay* was only completed in the year 1940: she is one of the Thunderbolt class, the newest in the Navy

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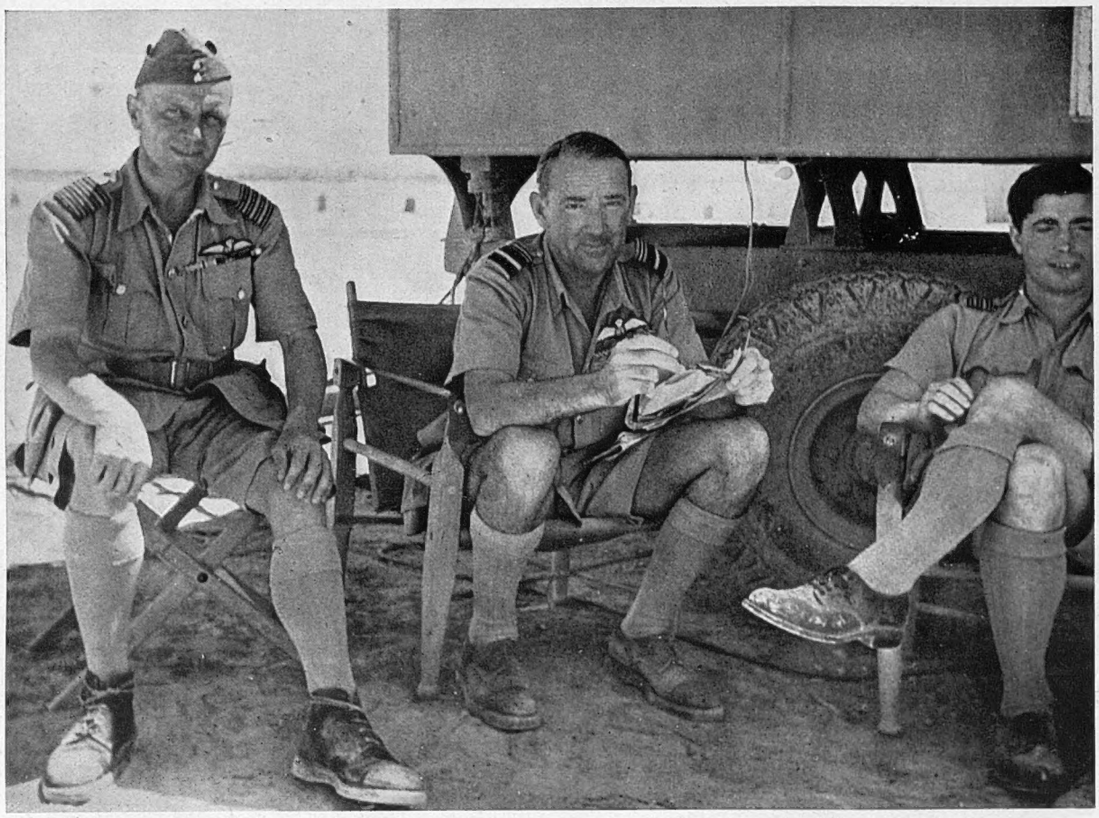
A WAR NEWSLETTER —No. 150

1, NEW OXFORD STREET, W.C.1.

El Alamein.—On the great battle which has raged for many days round El Alamein I have deliberately refrained from comment. One day it may be cited as a decisive battle of the world. We to-day are in no position to judge, any more than we can prophesy whether it will be a victory or defeat. We gained in confidence justifiably as the days passed and Rommel's advance was still halted. There were encouraging features. None struck me as more encouraging than the surrender of 600 Nazis. That event might indeed be a tremendous trifle. Tremendous, and *not* a trifle, has been the effort of the Air Force, which will one day be a part of literature as well as history. The forces on the ground necessarily enjoy less contemporary publicity. I doubt not at all that one day we shall thrill to read of their deeds of heroism and endurance. One other fact gave me comfort—the moderation in the reporting of such successes as came to us, not only in official bulletins. G.H.Q.s have learned their lesson; may it remain vivid! But the public's semi-official and Press interpreters have had it rammed home also. Their memory is no doubt shorter, but they won't forget *all* that bitter lesson of the childish folly of boast and exuberance in desert warfare. It remains to see how long the Press and B.B.C. talkers at home will maintain a higher standard of restraint.



THE MAN WHO IS RUNNING THE AIR WAR IN EGYPT—Air Vice-Marshal Coningham, A.O.C., Western Desert, with senior officers of the R.A.F. In supreme command in the Middle East is Air Chief-Marshal Tedder, whose forces, as stated by Mr. Churchill a few days ago, are at the entire disposition of General Auchinleck

Machinery of Civilised Existence.—In the method of their composition, there lies a danger that these notes of mine may often convey a wrong impression. They are the reactions of the day to events or observations of the day, published some days after those events. Sometimes the problem it suggests has solved itself before my "solution" is published. Those are among the handicaps of periodic journalism. Recently, I have noted down some evidence that the machinery of civilised (or peacetime) existence and of its social institutions is beginning to break down. That observation is neither a jeremiad nor an adverse criticism of anybody. On the contrary, it is the best proof that the nation is buckling to "total war," and cutting out irrelevancies at last. This break-up of peacetime machinery is inevitable. It need be dangerous only if we fail to realise its inevitability and to anticipate the breakdown by liberal concession and adjustment. The petrol cut is a prime cause of the breakdown. Many of the safeguards of legal procedure are no longer reasonably capable of fulfilment. The same applies to many wartime regulations. One of my own instances may be cited for an example of what I mean: The law requires in certain legal procedure that three or more persons shall attest a document before a notary public. But notaries public do not live in every village. Magistrates do. The legal requirement should be scrapped for the duration, and the magistrate's presence should be substituted for the notary's. It is only one of scores of examples of sound and civilised safeguards rendered almost unworkable by war conditions. It is a fair example. I believe that, unless Authority recognises the breakdown of peacetime machinery and liberally makes such concessions in advance (and suggests to judges and justices the growing need for interpreting war regulations more and more tolerably, in the light of the increasing difficulties of obedience), before this winter is over, there will be a great deal of avoidable grousing and of avoidable muddle and delay.

The Fourth War Autumn.—The fourth war autumn begins now to announce its arrival. There are signs in the leaves, in the air, in the sounds and scents of summer. The seasonal mentality of the first autumn of the Second World War is coming upon us again. Those war summers and winters have gone in a flash; or, alternatively, according to the mood of a moment, they have been an eternity. We have never been in any but a state of war. We cannot recall what it was like to sleep in peace, to have no fear of darkness or of naked lights, to use the boons of science for our pleasure and welfare, to bathe in the sea, to play cricket on our greens, to shoot or race or take an interest in social, sporting or artistic preoccupations, to travel or otherwise enlarge our minds or our physical range. I feel a call to examine the changes in our remote village during these grievous years. Truly, they are very great, although they are not vividly present to our minds until we settle down to ticket them. It is the same village, but, on reflection, oh! how different. On the eve of the longest day, we staged a great defence rally in our village. The Home Guard and their "Regular" instructors were all out on night operations. So were the Fire Service, the A.R.P. Service and the First-Aid detachments. Almost every soul was in the village street, and one noticed how few there were now (at long last) who did not belong to some such war organisation, how few who still merely pursued their peacetime occupations. Old and very young, the big majority wore some sort of uniform or badge and went to their war stations with a sense of purpose and understanding. One noticed also very clearly how completely the old class barriers had broken down. No doubt there was much that was muddled and ridiculous in our exercises, but there was nothing ridiculous or muddled in the spirit of our community. We were practising our actions in the event of enemy attack by air and overland, and, by a curious chance, shortly afterwards, a heavy bomb fell in our village and shattered our windows. In a way, it was a pity it had not fallen the night before, for that would have lent additional reality to our practice. This was the first bomb which had fallen in our village for a year and a quarter. We were quite used to them in 1941. We had begun to discount their disagreeable possibilities, from long immunity, and this explosive and chance packet no doubt has given us a "healthy shake-up."

Three Years of Change.—But to our stock-taking: first, these war years have come hardly on the older folk, and especially on the men. Among twenty or thirty of the smaller country houses in our community, a very large proportion of the housewives are now widowed. The fatigues of night duty, essential and heavy manual work in gardens and houses, have claimed the penalty of overwork or unaccustomed work. The womenfolk are strained and overworked and marked by war almost without exception. The houses themselves, when examined carefully, show clear signs of war damage and of neglect. Indoors and out, they reveal lack of attention and shortage of labour, which is now acute. Blistered paint, peeling plaster, stripped paper, broken windows, gaping roofs, crumbled tiles, crumbling drives, paths grown into tangled ribbons of weed, bracken and willow-herb everywhere advancing, banks and fences broken. Dust and dirt triumphing unchecked. One observes in the gardens how all the work that can be done is pure utility. Paths weeded at the borders of vegetable patches. Vegetables growing in the herbaceous border and on the tennis-lawn. The garages are stores for medical equipment, or hay barns. The bicycle is our means of transport and the next village our Ultima Thule. The familiar view of downs and parkland and meadow would be unrecognisable to a returned *émigré* of 1939. For the familiar turf and greenery are fast yellowing or showing brown. Nor are these signal changes physical only. Our hearts are changed, broadened and narrowed, hardened and softened, filled now with a new faith, now with a profounder disillusionment.

Up and Down—and Onward.—I write at a moment of new disappointment, a fresh reaction from unsupported belief in an early end to our great tragedy and testing-time. Indeed, to-day the end seems as far off as in that tragic autumn of 1939, and perhaps farther off. "Only yesterday"—such is human nature—the peak was in sight, the peak was passed, we were marching down the hill at last. To-morrow? Why, to-morrow it may seem so again. What hits us, hits our enemies. In a war of attrition, he who endures to the end shall be saved. We are hard pressed, but we have been through worse times and we weathered them. But our village will never be the same again. It has changed beyond recognition. Daily familiarity with its evolution has long hid from us these revolutionary changes. (And, incidentally, nothing *is* ever the same again, even in peacetime.) Would we have our "Auburn" back again, smug and tidy, narrow and selfish, purse-proud and class-conscious, snug and lazy, as in the years before and the years between? Why, no, I think not. We do not want back those years before and years between, nor *all* our yesterdays. We want peace; but not at the price of some of the lessons which war has taught us and some of the blessings it has brought us. Our homes are shabbier but our hearts are cleaner, and we know a little more about the meaning of life and death. We are older—and wiser.

My Secret Weapon.—I cannot resist a trade catalogue of useful gadgets. Despite disappointments, I still buy on sight and am quite often rewarded. My last success is a jewel and I will give away my secret weapon to anyone interested. It costs 2s. 6d. and it is like a safety-razor. It takes the place in the garden and the orchard of a scythe (which I can no longer wield), a pair of hedge-clippers, a sickle and even a turf-edger. It weighs a sugar plum and, unlike a razor, it does not appear to blunt or to chip, as some of its forerunners did. With its aid, I got in my first hay crop just before the rains came; with it I squared and tidied 200 yards of sprawling box hedge, shaved and edged all the long grass round the kitchen garden, cleared the ground under the fruit-trees, and tidied up a section of luxuriant grass steps. I hit many stones and twigs *en passant*, but the blade remains "as new." I shall make this tool an heirloom. It is the old man's companion and friend in the garden. It solves the problem of lost professional labour in the garden; it turns the amateur into a professional and the old sheep into a young ram. It costs half a crown: it is worth an entire Empire.

THE OLD STAGER

The EXPULSION of the NAZIS : *And Other News Items from Overseas*

DISCREDITED AXIS DIPLOMATS TO BRAZIL AND PARAGUAY SAIL FOR EUROPE : A view on the quayside just before their departure for Lisbon : Six hundred and thirty-two German, Italian and Rumanian ex-representatives left South America for Lisbon following on the severance of relations between Brazil and Paraguay and the Axis. Herr Kurt Prueffer and Signor Ugo Sola, ex-German and Italian Ambassadors to Brazil, left later in the Spanish liner *Cabo de Hornos*. Japan's representatives remained in Brazil pending their journey to Lorenço Marques by a North American liner which was to bring back South American representatives from Tokyo

EX-GESTAPO CHIEF, CARL DUBALL, in control of the Nazi network in Paraguay, at the quayside before going aboard the *Siqueira Campos*

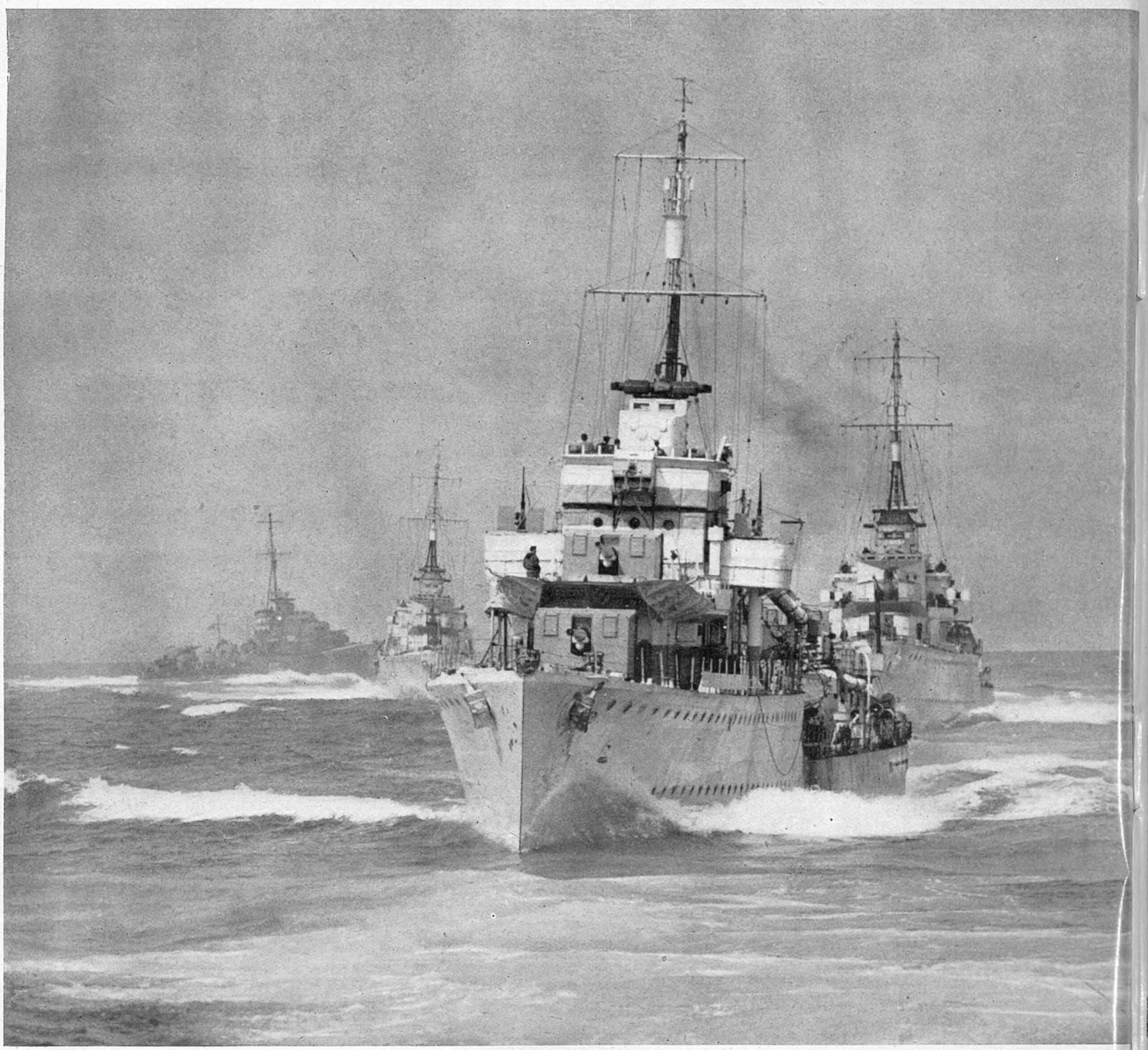
WHEAT IN THE HEART OF NAPLES—A scene in the Piazza del Municipio, the main street of the city : The necessity to supply their Nazi masters with vital foodstuffs has caused a serious shortage in Italy itself. To remedy this, every inch of soil is now under cultivation. Even flower-beds decorating the big cities are being used to grow wheat, as the two pictures here show

IN THE GALLERIA VITTORIO EMANUELE, the centre of Milan's business quarter, where wheat is being grown in the public square

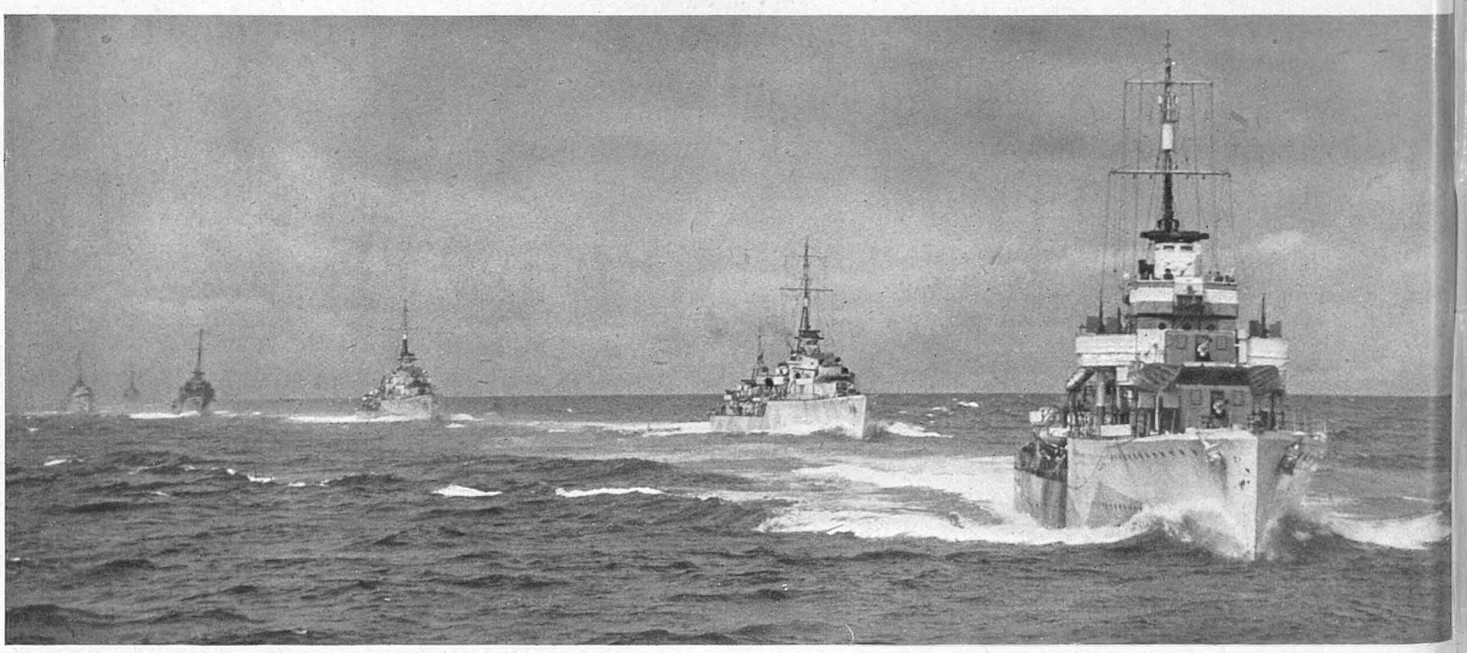
A CONVOY OF FIFTY CHILDREN FROM MONACO ARRIVES IN GENEVA : So bad is the food situation in the Principality that numbers of Monegasque children are now being sent to Switzerland. This picture shows the arrival at Geneva of the latest batch. In the centre is the young Princess Antoinette of Monaco (President of the Assistance and Relief Committee), who received her young compatriots. On the left is Councillor of State Balmer

THE R.A.F. IN WEST AFRICA—A ground crew shelters from the tropical heat under the wing of a reconnaissance bomber : Flying-boats, fighter squadrons, and reconnaissance bombers are combined in this R.A.F. outpost in West Africa. Living conditions are rough and the climate extreme. One of the aerodromes was carved out of the bush. In spite of the heat and lack of comfort, however, the airmen keep healthy and cheerful, and do their important jobs well

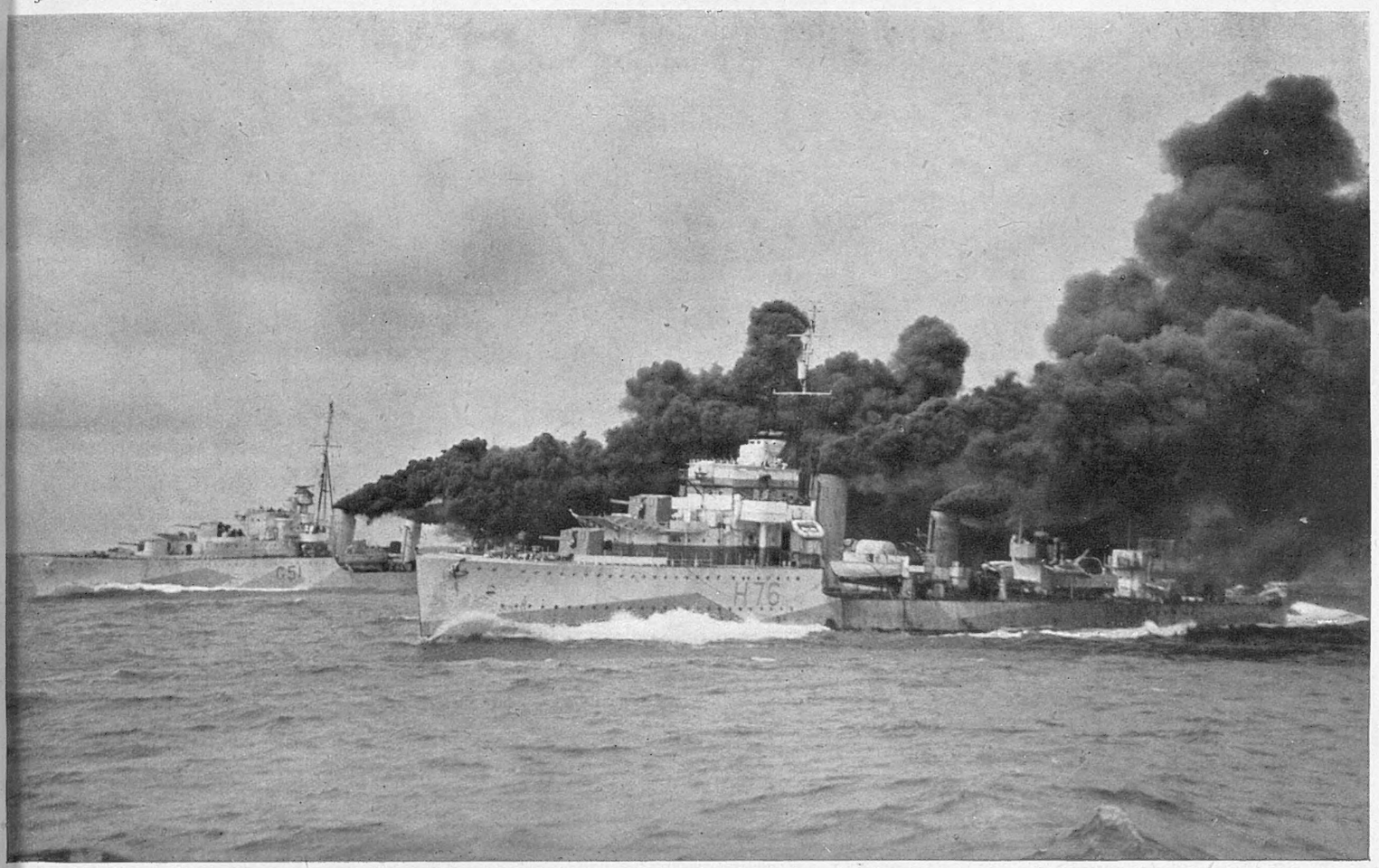
The WORK of the ROYAL NAVY: British Destroyers Carry Out Exercises at Se



A DIVISION OF DESTROYERS FORMING LINE AHEAD: In the tactical handling of these fast vessels, the British Navy has no superior. Destroyers are seldom at during war; their duties are wide-ranging, and their crews are on active service for long periods on end



THE FLOTILLA IN LINE AHEAD: A fine impression of modern vessels carrying out the battle tactics for which the Navy is justly famed. Most of the new type British destroyers have a speed almost approaching 40 knots when flat out

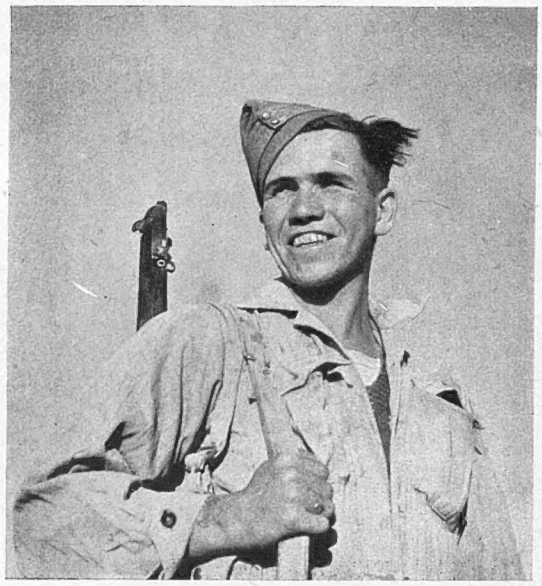


DESTROYERS LAYING A SMOKE-SCREEN AFTER A DUMMY TORPEDO ATTACK DURING EXERCISES : The screen is chemically produced, belching forth from the funnels in an impenetrable, oily cloud. A whole fleet could manœuvre behind such a screen—as happened recently in the Mediterranean

DURING THE EXERCISES AT SEA : Rear-Admiral R. L. Burnett, O.B.E. (in gold-peaked cap in centre), with Captain A. K. Scott-Moncrieff (behind him), on the bridge

The pictures reproduced here have just been issued by the Admiralty in illustration of the work of the destroyers—the "Handmaiden of the Royal Navy," as they have been called. Destroyers have borne a larger share of the fighting at sea than any other type of vessel during the present war: consequently, losses have not been light. Nor have the hard-worked destroyer crews had much opportunity for leisure spells ashore! In the Atlantic there have been the unceasing patrols; and in the Mediterranean and in the Far East the comparatively small destroyers have not hesitated, on occasion, to engage even battleships! Rear-Admiral Burnett (seen in the above picture) commanded destroyers in the Grand Fleet during the last war, as in this. He is seen on the bridge of the Flotilla Leader, with other destroyer officers

The LATEST PICTURES from the EIGHTH ARMY in EGYPT



THREE TYPICAL BRITISH SOLDIERS OF THE 50TH DIVISION, which successfully retired from the Gazala area after Rommel's rapid advance from Knightsbridge : left—Gunner Hatton from Worcestershire ; in centre—Sergeant J. Sampson of York ; on right—Gunner O'Neille of Folkestone

When the South African Division holding the Gazala positions fell back along the coast road to the Tobruk area after Rommel's break-through at Knightsbridge and El Adem, the line of retreat was held open for them by the 50th Division. This had the result that the latter themselves became surrounded ! To have attempted a break-through to the east would have been certain suicide : Major-General Ramsden, therefore, decided to attack Italian positions to the west, and then swing southwards and, finally, eastwards towards the British lines. This move took the Italians completely by surprise, and the 50th Division drove their way through enemy camps and positions : all opposition was overcome, and the 50th Division arrived at their rendezvous practically intact

A U.S. SENATOR IN THE EGYPT BATTLES : Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, now a major in the U.S. Army, was one of the American officers reported to have gone into action with the tanks in the Alamein fighting on July 7

DURING THE ESCAPE OF THE 50TH DIVISION Private Bird and Private Dear, of the Gree Howards, overhauling their Bren gun carrie after breaking through the enemy's line

FIELD MARSHAL SMUTS VISITS THE SOUTH AFRICANS IN THE DESERT : He was highly amused at Air Mechanic A. McEwan's promising goatee beard, and promised that in future " Ouma " (Mrs. Smuts) would see that he did not run out of razor blades. " Ouma," or grandmother, is the term of affection used by all South Africans for the Field Marshal's wife : she is the head of South African Gifts and Comforts Fund. This picture was taken at a forward operational aerodrome

A BEARDED CORPORAL who was among a numbe of British prisoners who escaped back t their own lines. He attributed his escap to his tough appearance—and, in particular to his fine, but terrifying, beard !

"GENERAL GRANT" TANKS GOING UP TO BATTLE IN EGYPT FOR THE SECOND TIME: Knocked-out in the early stages of the campaign, these American fighting vehicles were recovered and repaired; here they are seen all ready for another crack at the enemy. This picture was sent by Cable and Wireless radio from Cairo

THE END OF A SUPPLY TRUCK IN THE DESERT: British guns set fire to this vehicle—one of an enemy supply column: the soldiers were approaching warily, with rifles at the ready, to discover if there were any survivors amongst its crew

AFRAID HE'LL BE LATE FOR THE BUS! A small patrol with Bren carriers, anti-tank guns and 3-in. mortars penetrated into enemy territory and met five vehicles with a number of Italian infantrymen. The carriers worked their way round to the enemy's flank: the mortars opened fire, and the carriers charged with their guns in action. The infantry soon surrendered. Then a sixth vehicle appeared, and the Italian driver (above) seemed only too eager to surrender

LEADERSHIP IS HALF THE BATTLE

The Example of Rommel is Now Before Us, and the Whole Question of Leadership in Battle is Under Scrutiny. We, too, Have Our Rommels . . . if Only We Would Employ Them in the Right Fields of Action

By FERDINAND TUOHY

WHEN matters go wrong for British arms a praiseworthy national characteristic as likely as not makes itself felt—namely, not to visit blame on the commander involved, or even to suggest it. Blame may come months or perhaps years later, but not at the time, although a distorted notion of how a defeat occurred can result from this abstention from personal criticism. Some of the explanations advanced are, one would almost think, purposely

FIELD-MARSHAL ROMMEL (on left) with General Nehring, one of his Commanders of the Afrika Korps in Egypt, poring over a map of the desert

sought in order to avoid visiting blame on the beaten commander, who usually fades out of the communiqués and out of active operations.

A commander who has been welcomed as a magnificent fighter, as a strategic or tactical lion only a few months earlier, on precisely what grounds does not always appear at the time, is led into the shades and left there. Silence.

Now, our friends the Americans are worrying about this leadership in battle business. They visualise great Allied armies some day soon becoming engulfed in battle, and they are wondering if the enterprise may not be botched by inadequate leadership. They "figure out" that so very few Allied commanders have had real battle experience other than going back in retreat, and they are nervous. Are the best men standing ready to take charge of these future operations? Or will some of these, too, be silently shelved in the hour when they will be most needed?

The Americans are experiencing a reaction from thinking in terms of endless tanks, aircraft, guns, and all the rest of the mechanised paraphernalia, and have come to the conclusion that too little attention is being paid to the individual merits of the men destined to use these articles and, above all, of such men as will lead in actual battle. Leadership is held to be the most vital of all requisites, and Britain's contribution is not rated very high since Wavell's brief and halcyon period.

Has qualification through the polo and hunting-fields been overdone in our case? Too much of the amateur and sporting mentality upon high and too little hard professionalism? Have we, who invented the tank, no experts and specialists capable of leading armoured formations as more than one foreigner has succeeded in doing? Or, if we have such men, are we for some reason failing to make proper use of them? Such are questions being asked in the United States, and though Americans are inclined to leap from one thing to another far too swiftly, we can hardly ignore questions involving the leadership of men scheduled to fight so closely together as the naval, air and land forces of Britain and Columbia.

Of course it is Rommel who has provoked the latest scrutiny: Rommel Africanus or ex-Africanus, whichever he is destined to be. A typical comment is that of Major Fielding Eliot to the effect that, "We have seen almost every sort of explanation for the recent Libyan disaster, which probably was at least 75 per cent. due to the superior leadership of Rommel." And the red-haired, former professor's son is hymned as a great commander fairly walking away with it amid so many far lesser fry.

Yet is not the 75 per cent. something of a caricature? Rommel seems first and foremost to have "*le diable au corps*" judging by the way he rushes to and fro, disentangling himself from great difficulty and then putting his opponents in greater difficulty still. His memorable order for the crash through to Abbeville in May 1940 shows him as the stuff of daring leaders: "Behind you there will be nothing; to your left there will be nothing, but ahead of you there will be Rommel." Yet, in accounting for his victories in Libya, other factors are apt to be overlooked in the general praise of his skill and dash. Such as:

1.—Rommel has been in North Africa continuously since early 1941 and perhaps since the end of 1940. During the same period the British forces operated under five names: Wavell, Cunningham, Auchinleck, Ritchie, and again Auchinleck. Moreover, Rommel had been daft about tanks ever since 1938, and made a special study of their uses in the desert before going there. 2.—Rommel never sat back in a form of Cairo G.H.Q. but kept the whole nerve apparatus of his force well forward: nor is it an answer that British headquarters had to remain in Cairo because of Syria, Iran, etc. The Commander-in-Chief (Auchinleck) could soon enough be spared for the actual battlefield when things got to such a pitch that his presence became operative. The unwieldy Cairo G.H.Q. is bad, and let us hope that after the present operations turn into a pause, it will be radically pruned and transplanted. As I pointed out some time ago, Allenby would have none of Cairo. He put his headquarters down in the desert with what success history tells. 3.—Rommel had a picked corps of athletes under his command. That is what the Afrika Korps amounted to until recently, at all events. Every young man was hand-picked and hardened in Greater Germany before being despatched to Africa, where, I think it can also be claimed, they had Führer-fanaticism to spur them on, and the rich release of the Nile to lure them on. 4.—We have heard the evidence of Rommel's superiority with certain weapons. 5.—There is other evidence of the value of the diet and drugs which have been given the Axis shock units. Men may collapse in the end but they can keep going like furies for several days and nights, and in that time victory can be theirs. 6.—We are in the dark as to whether any "fifth column" worked in the rear of our formations, and, if so, how close up.

It is weakening to become hypnotised by an enemy commander.

American experts consider that Timoshenko, MacArthur and Admiral Cunningham have proved themselves the best finds in leadership on the Allied side. They cannot make up their minds about Wavell and wonder why he was moved all over the place to hold a succession of new babies. If any man is tired, it should be Wavell, after being wafted round the world. If he is not tired, some think he could be called to more immediate and vital fields than Delhi. But the point I wish to make is that the above leaders have all commanded in chief, whereas it is possible that the Allies lack, even more than supreme commanders, subordinate commanders of armoured corps: Rommels, Hobarts and de Gaulles. It has been stated that we opened the May battle in Libya with only one high general officer who had been interested in armoured warfare for more than a few years. Even this general was for twenty-five years in the old horse cavalry. Yet in Britain were expert armoured commanders who might quite well have been flown out at a day's notice if such unorthodoxy were permissible under the eyes of our military mandarins. Take the case of Major-General Hobart. This must be the same Hobart who first became a tank fan on the Somme in 1916, when he was in "Intelligence." That's far enough back. In 1938 he was sent to Egypt in command of Britain's first armoured division. It was this division, trained to a high pitch of efficiency, which virtually won off its own bat the battle of Sidi Barrani and the first campaign in Libya. But Hobart had been sent home a year before because his ideas of mechanised warfare were considered unsound. After the Germans had vindicated him, all too successfully, Hobart was reinstated in a command at home—and he has been left in that command ever since, while his subordinates, who were more like apprentices at one time, have passed over his head.

I have here a report from a foreign officer who writes, among other things, "I was attached to the German Army. The divisional commander was absolutely mad about the exploited and unexploited possibilities of tanks. His faith in armoured formations was such that he took a tremendous amount of pains in planting the same enthusiasm in the people under him.

He said Hobart gave him an answer to so many queries—and an inspiration. When a visiting anti-tank expert spoke of tank limitations as well as of tank or no-tank country, the General impatiently brushed such opinions aside, saying, 'It is the old school and already old history.' I put my faith in Hobart, the new man. At the conclusion of that year's try-outs and demonstrations, this German General gave a dinner. In champagne he gave only one toast—'To Hobart!'"

GENERAL DE GAULLE, Leader of the Free French, but also one of the most distinguished exponents of modern armoured warfare

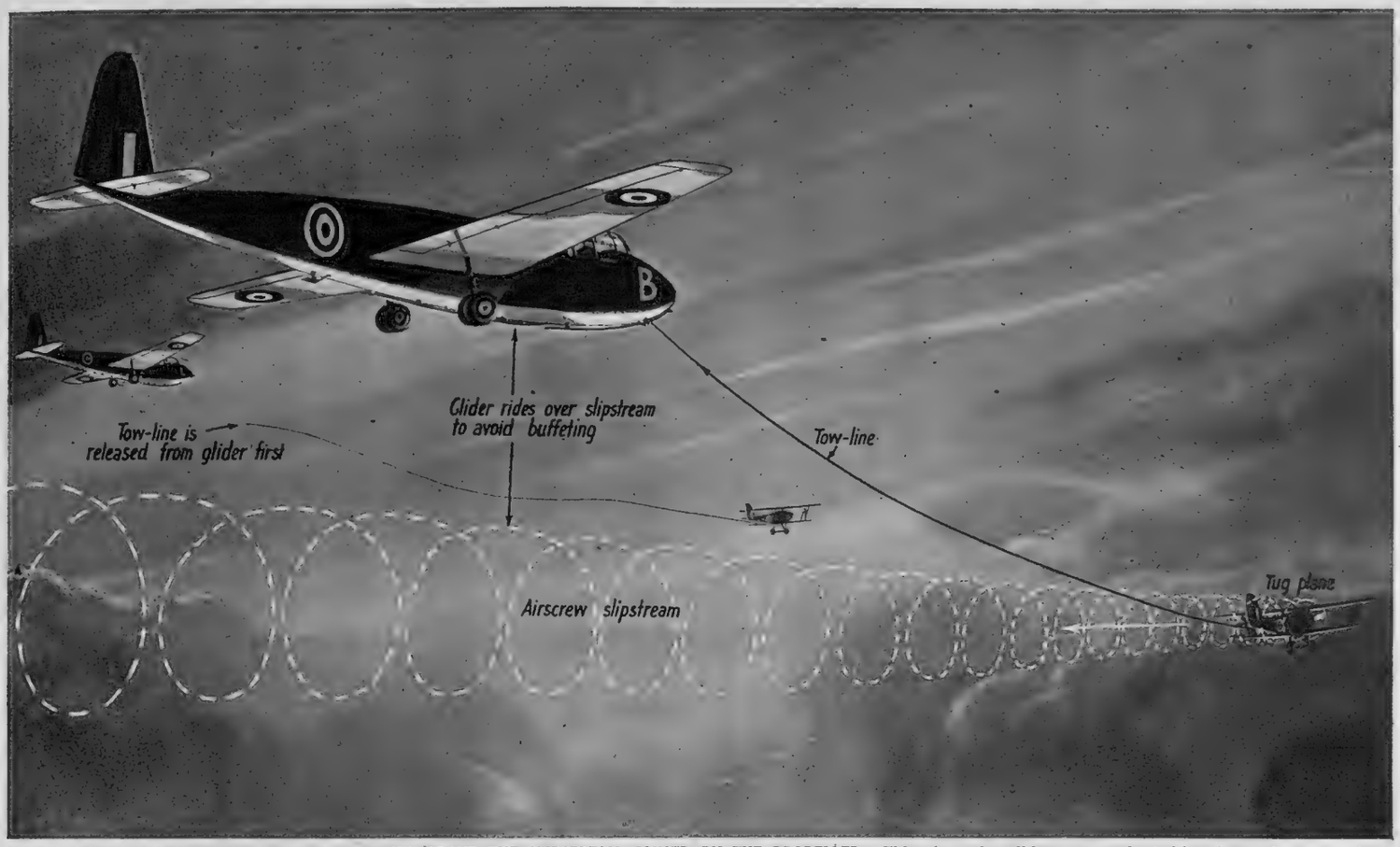
MAJOR-GENERAL P. C. S. HOBART, now a Commander at home, but a tank expert since 1916. He was Commander of a Tank Brigade from 1934 to 1937

The above comes with a covering letter which says: "While I quite agree with you that de Gaulle ought to be better utilised, in his natural sphere, I would nevertheless suggest that there is even more reason to make use of our own pioneers of mechanised warfare—who were many years ahead of all other armies in developing the new technique—and whose ideas the Germans were actively applying some years before de Gaulle had even begun his unsuccessful if admirable effort to inculcate similar ideas in the French Army—the most resistant of all to modern ideas."

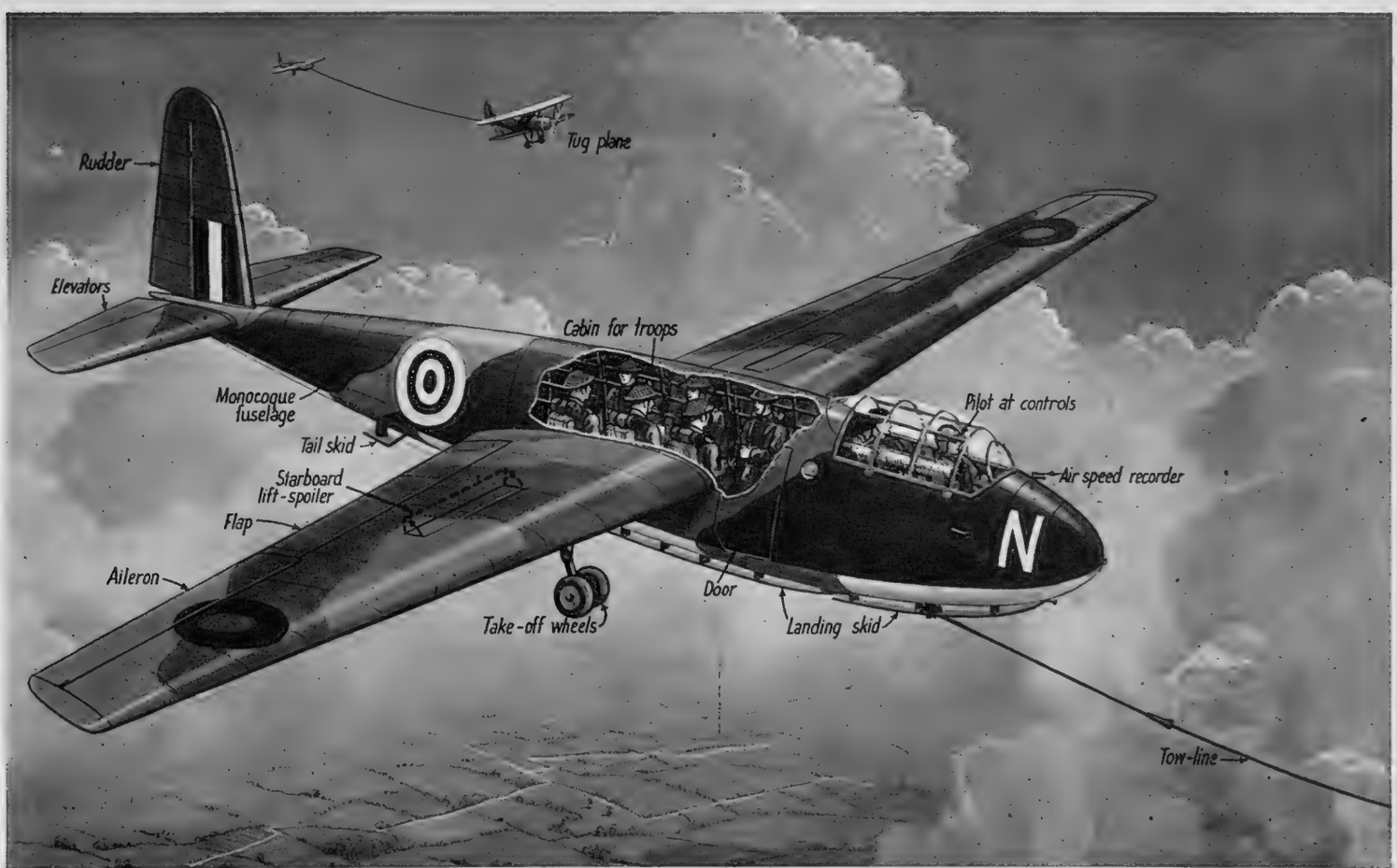
The reference to General de Gaulle hardly fits in with Mr. Churchill's reference to that soldier during the Libyan debate. The Prime Minister said that, "The use of armoured forces as now being used was largely French, as General de Gaulle's book shows. It was left to the Germans to convert these ideas to their own use."

However, this is not the time for argument but to get hold of the best men, and it has always seemed absurd that we should plan a descent on the Continent, and particularly on France, without calling on perhaps the most widely recognised of pioneers in the new warfare. Is it not probable that de Gaulle has fought and refought every tank battle since he came to do politics (however vital) in London more than two years ago? And is it not furthermore probable that he to-day has ideas which, if they could be transferred into action, would push us ahead of the enemy in this field?

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this publication should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export



WHEN BEING TOWED, THE GLIDER PILOT FLIES ABOVE THE SLIPSTREAM CAUSED BY THE PROPELLER. This gives the glider a smoother ride : it reaches its desired height owing to its excellent aerodynamic design. When the tow-line is eventually released, it is the glider pilot who operates the release mechanism



HOW THE NEW ARMY GLIDERS HAVE BEEN DESIGNED : A detailed drawing which shows the various features and how the pilot and troops are disposed within the fuselage

BRITAIN'S NEW GLIDERS

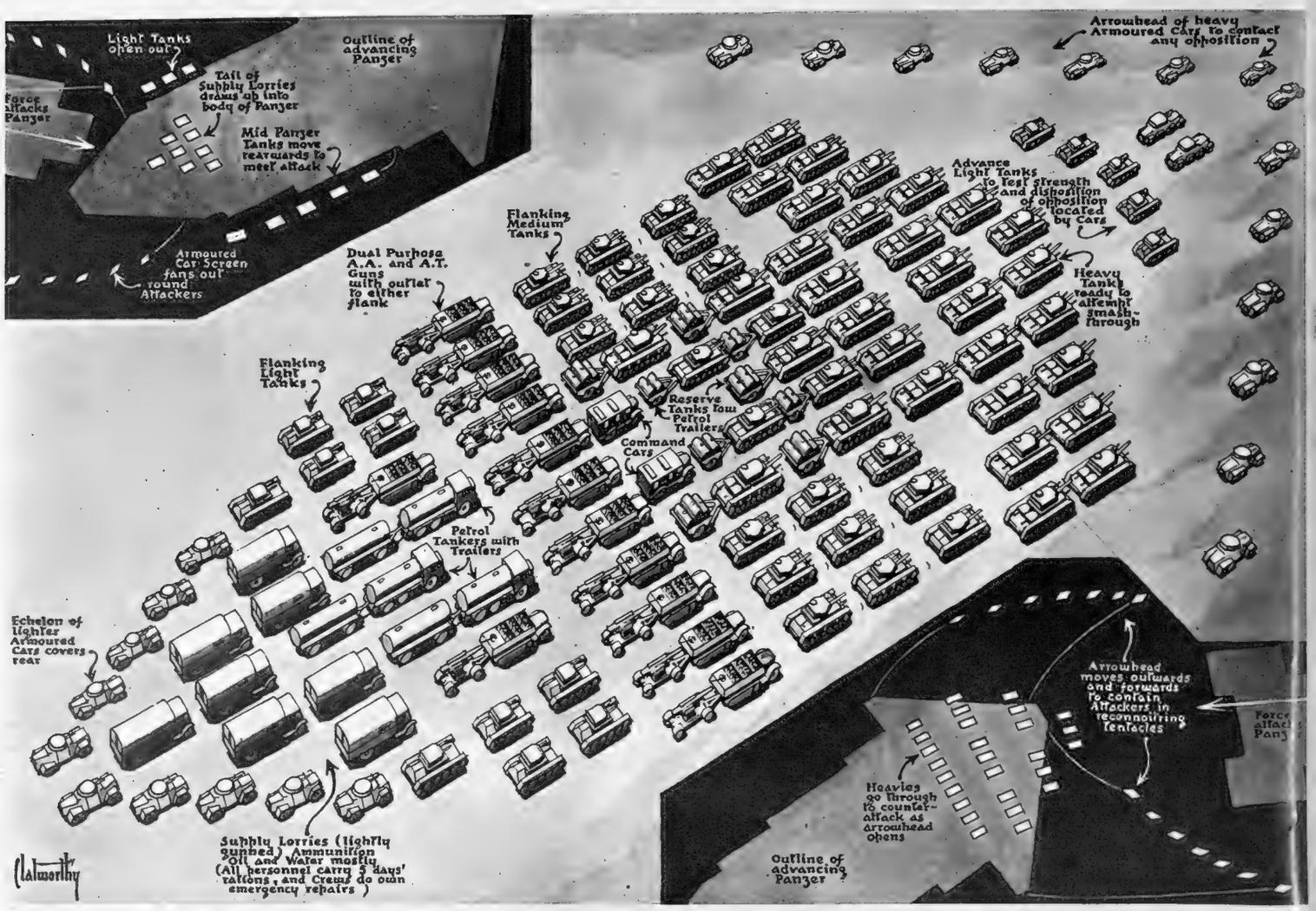
How they have been Designed, and How they are Towed in the Air

Two special drawings by L. Ashwell Wood

At long last, the authorities have released details of our new Glider Army. The "Glider Pilots' Regiment" is part of the Army Air Corps, formed as part of the Army's air-borne units. The drawing immediately *above* shows one of the new Hotspur gliders in actual flight as towed by a Hawker Hector. The engineless aircraft is a well-built production of the "monocoque" principle and with a considerable wing-span to bear fairly heavy loads. The pilot is in front at the controls. The towing attachment is beneath the pilot, who releases the line at the appropriate moment. Owing to its lifting qualities, the glider is able to fly above the slipstream from the towing aircraft, as shown in the *upper* drawing : this is essential, as otherwise the air disturbance would make very rough riding for the occupants of the glider. After the glider pilot has dropped his end of the tow-line, the troop-carrier is then free to be manœuvred for a landing. The pilot puts on the flaps and lift-spoilers, and then flies across wind for 200 or 300 ft. : then he turns into wind and goes down to land. The actual touch-down is by means of the special landing-skid at front and rear. The wheels beneath the wings are used only for the take-off.

b

The BATTLE FORMATION of the GERMAN PANZERS in LIBYA



A GERMAN DIVISION ADVANCES INTO BATTLE AS A COHERENT WHOLE: The force presents a "stream-lined" impression, the enemy units moving in a Square, with supply columns in the centre, and with flanks guarded by medium and light tanks. The arrow-head is composed of heavily-armoured cars to meet and beat down any opposition—*Drawing by S. W. Clatworthy (Artist's Copyright in the U.S.A.)*

Reports from the battle zone in Egypt indicate that one way in which the Germans have achieved greater speed in their movements has been through their method of economising in the number of long, vulnerable transport columns following in the rear of their units.

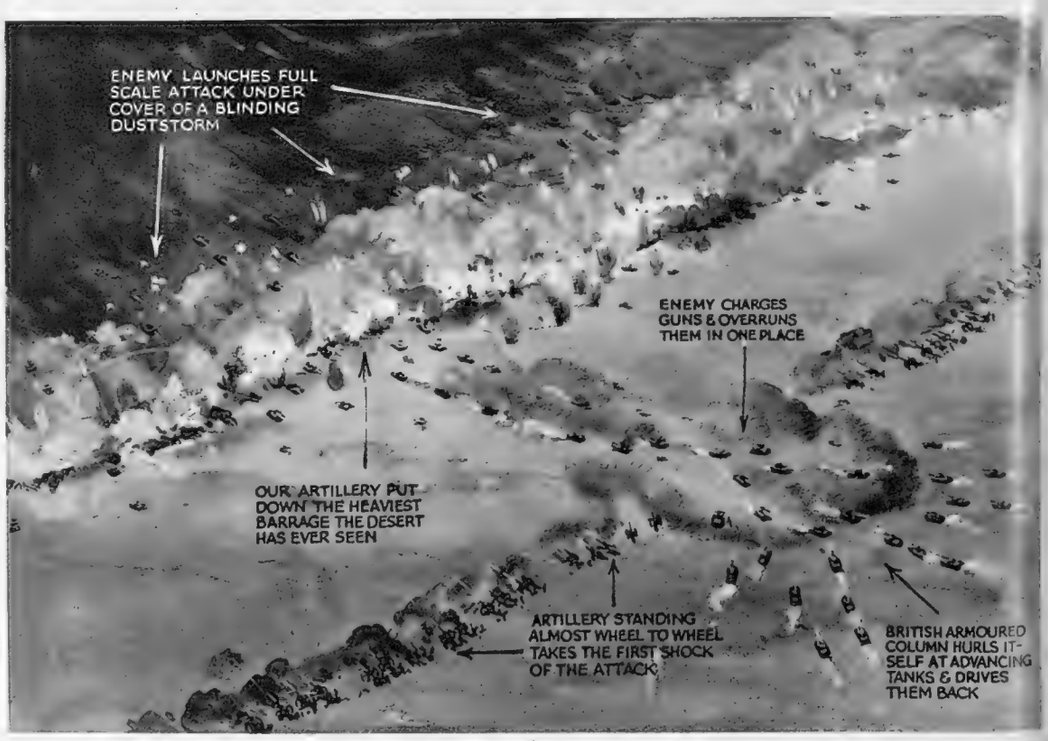
Behind the mobile advance forces of the Germans come their armoured divisions, which move as a coherent whole—the whole force presenting "a stream-lined impression, their units moving in a Square, with supply columns in the centre." The diagram above shows how one such division is composed, due allowance being made for the fact that in actual desert operations the various vehicles would be far more widely spaced out than is indicated here.

According to R.A.F. pilots, Rommel's forces are led by tanks and armoured cars in "arrow-head" formation; more tanks and armoured cars and anti-aircraft guns protect the flanks and following units; behind the main advance, in echelon, come supplies in box formation, protected by strong fighting columns on both flanks and in the rear.

It was by this means that the advance to the Nile Valley was carried out by three columns, the centre one of which was in the "arrow-head" formation described here. When it comes to fighting, it has been observed that Rommel does not believe in splitting up his tank forces for more than one night, or striking with less than forty or fifty tanks at a time.

Rommel's methods of concentration certainly appear to have been justified during the recent battles: his movement round the south of our position on the first day of the battle around Knightsbridge, for instance, was very rapid: so was the movement of his divisions swinging up to the north after the fall of Bir Hacheim; and so was his advance towards Alexandria.

In the drawing above, the two diagrams inset in the top left and bottom right indicate how the German divisions react when attacked from the rear or from head-on. In the former case, the armoured-car screen at the rear fans out and back to envelop the spearhead of the attack, whilst stronger Panzer tanks move back to lend support with their much heavier armament. When attacked from the front, the "arrow-head" at once moves outwards and forwards to "contain" the attackers, whilst the "heavies" go through to counter-attack as the "arrow-head" opens out.



TANK COMBAT IN THE ALAMEIN AREA: How the first big assault by Rommel's tanks and lorried infantry was thrown back by British armoured vehicles which were rushed to the gap to check the threatened break-through—*Drawing by E. G. Lambert*

Soon after the 8th Army had reached the Alamein positions, where General Auchinleck had previously decided to make his big stand, Rommel launched a big assault by enemy tanks and lorried infantry. After preliminary jockeying for position he launched his attack under cover of a blinding sandstorm. It was led by German and Italian tanks, followed by infantry of the crack Afrika Korps, brought up by lorry.

The first shock of the assault was taken by our artillery which, almost wheel to wheel, put down the heaviest barrage the desert has ever seen. The enemy tanks failed to penetrate it except in one place, where they charged our guns and overran them. A British armoured column then swept to the rescue, hurled itself at the advancing spearhead, and pushed the enemy tanks back

AFTER THE CLASH OF ARMOURED VEHICLES IN THE DESERT: A litter composed of burnt-out German transport

War has brought an astonishing change to the great Libyan Desert in a broad belt bordering the Mediterranean. For many centuries the interminable scrub, stone and sand was broken only by the whitened bones of the skeletons of camels. Now the desert face has been changed from El Alamein back to the foot of the Cyrenaican plateau. Not only is the surface crust cut up by the innumerable track marks of motorised vehicles (a process which has created artificial local sandstorms !), but all along this zone are spread more or less continuous lines of broken cars, lorries, guns, tanks, Red Cross vans and others. Around evacuated fortified areas are broken-down dug-outs, with bits and pieces of equipment: occasionally a big gun, with long barrel, points forlornly to the sky. These are part of the litter of a modern battlefield, for they have long since worn themselves out and there has been no opportunity for either side to salvage and repair them—a work which would occupy too many men who could well be employed on more vital tasks elsewhere

THE BOSTON BOMBERS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN AIR FORCE have been in continuous action over the battle area. Here one of these U.S.-built aircraft is being bombed-up prior to taking off for still another raid on the enemy and his transport columns

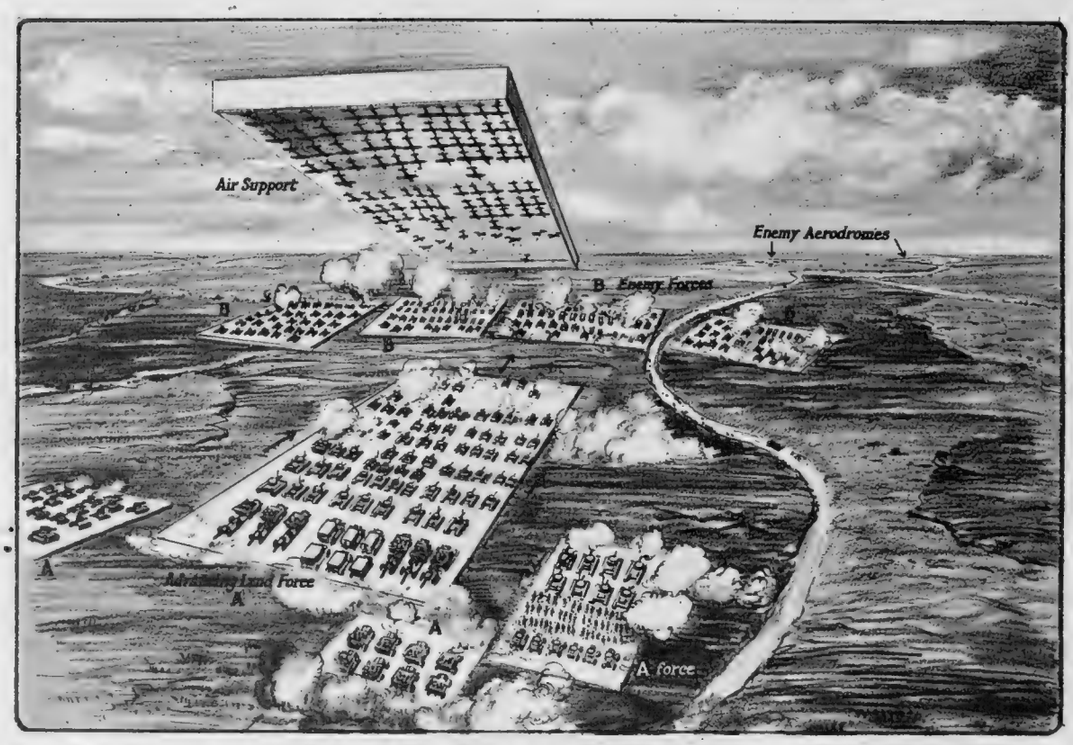
A good deal of the bombing of the enemy supply lines has been carried out by the versatile Boston aircraft, which is one of the more successful of the American-built aircraft now operating in the Middle East. Some of the most successful pilots in attacks in the desert have been members of the South African Air Force, who have been operating by day and by night. It was a South African squadron, for instance, which recently accounted for thirteen Stuka dive-bombers out of a force of fifteen ! A few days ago it was announced that the Boston bombers flown by South African pilots had the remarkable record of not suffering a single casualty from enemy fighter action during the whole of the present campaign ! For this they have to thank the strong and vigilant R.A.F. fighter escorts which accompanied them on their trips to the enemy's back areas

The Fighting in Libya

AIR AND LAND FORCES IN CO-OPERATION

Some Points on the Problem of Unified Control and Communication in Modern Warfare

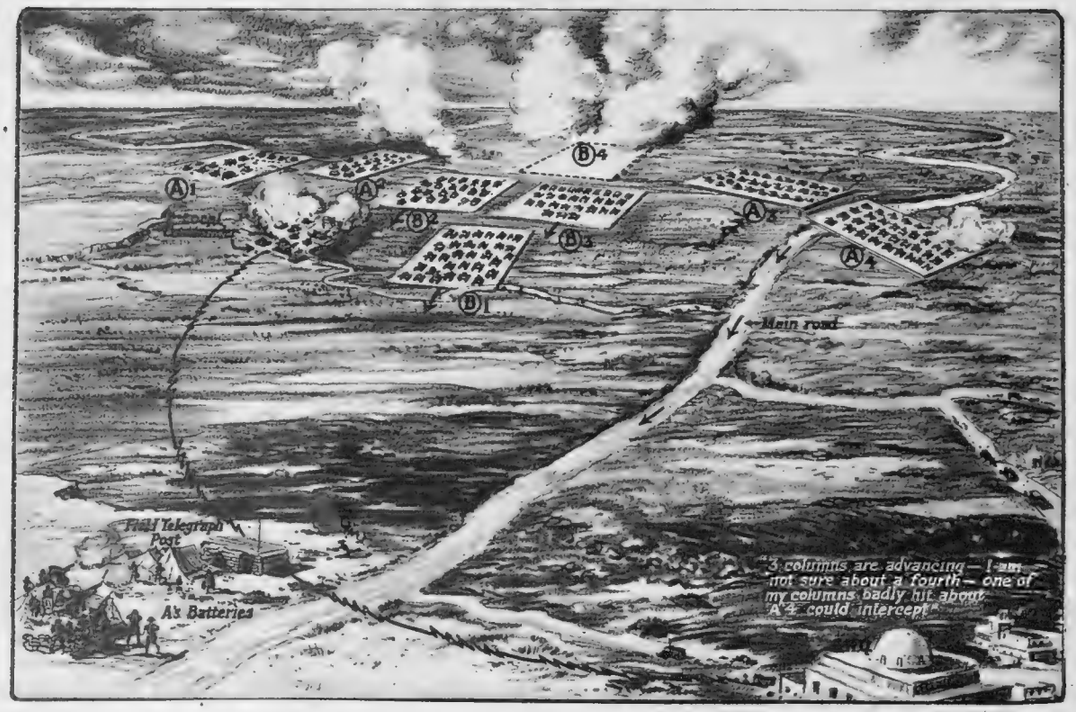
IT is becoming quite clear that the crucial problem of modern tactics is the joint difficulty first, of keeping G.H.Q. informed of what is happening over a battle area of several hundred square miles, and secondly of securing rapid action upon the decisions made by the



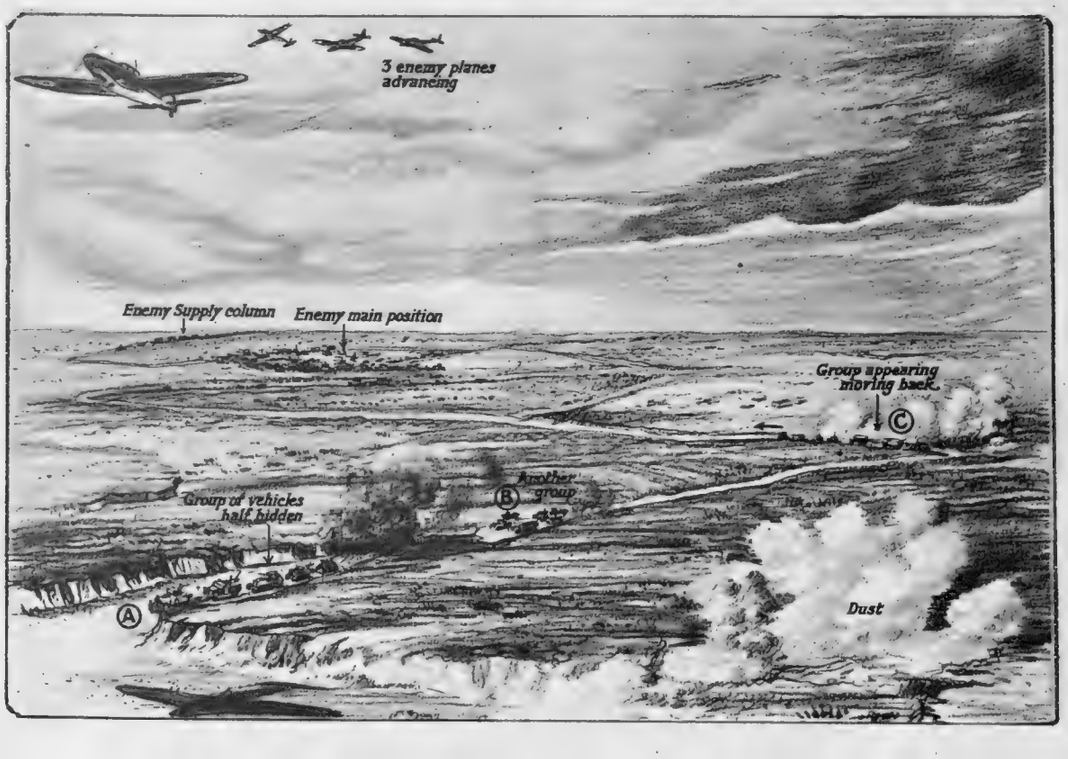
1. AIR SUPPORT FOR THE LAUNCHING OF A STRONG ASSAULT on the enemy : The advancing land force **A**, having decided to attack in strength at a given moment, is able to move forward—at least during the initial stages—under cover of a very strong air "umbrella." The latter can perform a variety of functions : it can bomb the enemy's strong points, disorganise his supplies and reinforcements in the back areas, and keep the High Command informed of all that is going on within the battle area and behind. After the initial surprise, however, the enemy **B** will call upon his own aircraft to lend their aid and to break up the "umbrella" : if the attackers have not made onslaughts on the enemy's aerodromes and thus immobilised his aircraft on the ground, the air will soon be full of opposing bombers and fighters and reconnaissance planes

command, as the result of the information which has reached them. The modern general conducts a three-dimensional battle. To the back-and-forth sway of the struggle on land he has added the lightning cut and thrust of aerial warfare, the savage attack of the dive bomber. He is lucky if he has not also some naval problem to consider, even if it is only the routine of supply and transport.

It is quite clear that the man in command *must know*, beyond a peradventure, exactly what is happening at every phase of the struggle. Given two armies roughly similar in strength, victory will undoubtedly go to the High Command which is kept best informed, and so able to retrieve its own lapses



2. RAPID COMMUNICATION BETWEEN LOCAL COMMANDER AND G.H.Q. IS ESSENTIAL : Many reports from the battle zone in Egypt have stressed the importance of quick communication between the Field Commanders and G.H.Q. Here is a typical case : the local commander at **A1** (in command of forces at this point and at **A2**) finds that his other columns at **A3** and **A4** have been separated owing to a break-through by the enemy at **B1, 2** and **3** : he knows that these three blocks are attacking, but is in doubt about another enemy force **B4**. His messages go back to G.H.Q. through a Field Telegraph Post ; replies reach him by the same roundabout route. Sometimes his messages are inaccurately relayed, and have to be repeated and decoded, much valuable time being lost in the process. Similar instances frequently occurred during the recent fighting



or follow up those of the enemy, at the highest speed.

Without adding more than is avoidable to the ink already spilt in connection with Libya one is prepared, without hesitation, to describe the results as being due to the superiority of the Germans, not in morale or material, *but in knowledge of what was happening*. Rommel used men, guns, tanks and planes as one cohesive whole—the several limbs of the one body, each linked and able to come to the aid of the other as easily and naturally as a man can lift his hand to his mouth. His air force struck where it was wanted, when it was wanted, in decisive strength and with telling effect. His troops were never left to endure the ordeal of attack from the air and attack

3. ONE OF THE DIFFICULTIES OF AIR RECONNAISSANCE : Aircraft observation was, of necessity, relied upon greatly by the British High Command both before and after the retreat to the El Alamein line. Yet such observation has often been carried out only with great difficulty and with a certain amount of error. Objects hidden in desert gullies and concealed by the dust and desert sandstorms *may* be tanks, but they may be powerful concentrations of lorry-borne artillery : one group may be transport columns, but they *may* be infantry or tanks or repair units at work. And there is always the possibility of interference with the work of reconnaissance by enemy fighter aircraft. Such difficulties in the gathering of accurate information must be allowed for by the High Command when planning the progress of the battle

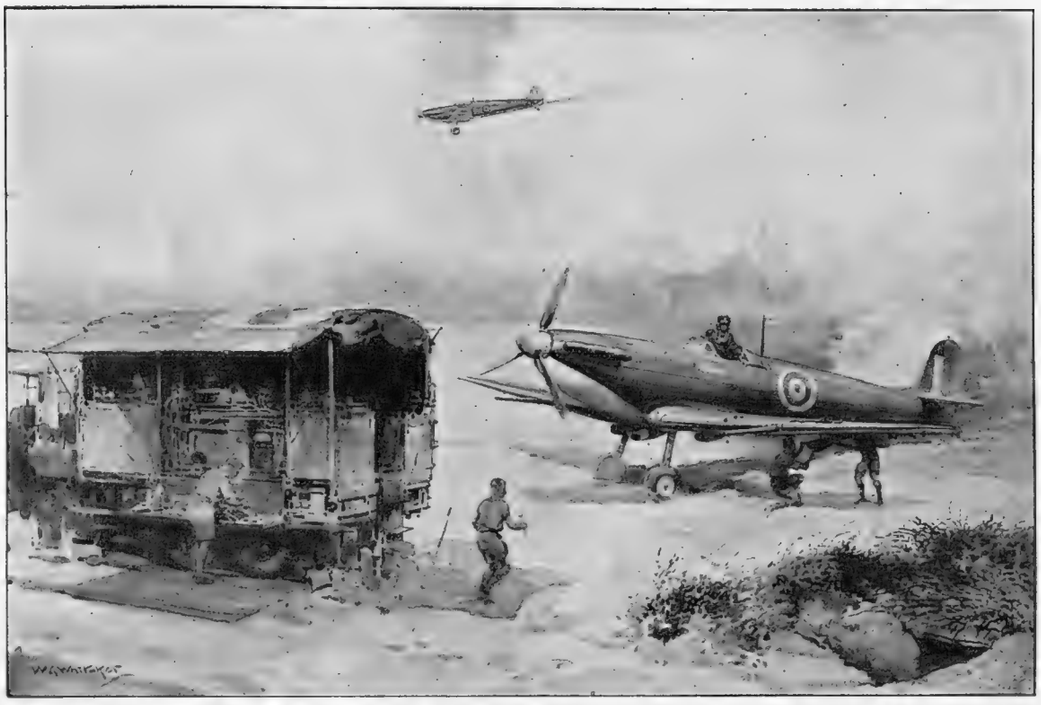
from the ground at the same time. They pressed forward confidently under their fighter umbrella at a speed which has never been rivalled over similar country. Even when they were checked at Bir Hacheim, we were unable to counter-attack because it was not possible, *in the time available*, to recall our fighters and bombers from the supply-bombing task assigned them when the battle first opened. The only task Rommel assigned his air force was that of accompanying himself and his troops in the field, and answering immediately any call for assistance.

It would be quite unjust to regard our Libyan Command as being unaware of the advantages of personal contact with the forces in the field. It is probably an open secret that our G.H.Q. nowadays is more often a large Dorchester armoured car roving over the combat area than a static point or dug-out. We know, too, that we have excellently designed armoured reconnaissance and scouting vehicles, manned with a high proportion of trained intelligence officers, and that these should be the means of feeding G.H.Q. with a constant flow of last-minute news. Besides, every tank has *at least* one radio, and infantry and artillery are quite liberally equipped. In theory, at any rate, the G.H.Q. should have been as well supplied with up-to-the-minute reports as the sub-editors' room of a London evening paper. Did Tobruk report dive-bombers attacking? Then within a few seconds the order to intervene should have been passed to a standing patrol of our fighters. Were our tanks taken by surprise in ambush? Then the fact should have been known and reinforcements and air support brought up without delay. Quite clearly this is what happened to Rommel, for we read of him personally conducting the attack on Tobruk. Equally clearly, it did not happen, or did not consistently happen for us. Our forces, land and air, were dispersed each about their business, and were overwhelmed in turn by superior strength before help could reach them. Why did it happen? Was it because (as is, I am informed, true) the Germans use an entirely different system of radio control to our own? Did the scores of reports from our own units jam one another and result in hopeless confusion?

It is at least possible, as no wireless technician will deny. One of the systems that we use is the old "amplitude modulation" method of signal control; the Germans and Americans use the much more modern and selective system known as "frequency modulation." The advantage of this last method is that, where two stations are working on the same wave-length, the wanted station need have only twice the signal strength of the unwanted station for it to be heard with perfect freedom from interference. With our "amplitude control" system, the wanted station has to be thirty times stronger than an unwanted station on the same wave-length before it can be properly received. And the background noise is always much worse.

May this not be the real secret of Libya? That whatever our general strategy, and conception of proper use for the R.A.F. may have been, the failure to get the news through prevented us from using whatever plans we had. In Fleet Street parlance, the opposition "scooped" us.

E. J. V.



HOW THE DESERT FIGHTERS WERE KEPT FLYING: The "workshop" on the left is a fitted lorry equipped to deal with all necessary repairs. In the right foreground is a dug-out used by the ground crews and pilots: all tents were done away with and everyone slept in covered-in holes in the ground—*Drawing by W. G. Whitaker*

EVACUATING FORWARD AERODROMES IN LIBYA: One of the most striking efforts of the R.A.F. was the manner in which they cleared up their desert landing-grounds. All administrative tents and workshops were removed, and disabled aircraft unable to fly off (two such are shown here) were destroyed as Rommel's forces came nearer

—*Drawing by W. G. Whitaker*

The R.A.F. suffered losses during Rommel's lightning advance to Egypt, but nevertheless they were able to withdraw from Libya as a compact fighting unit, and still managed to retain air superiority in the subsequent battles around El Alamein. One after another, all the way back from Tobruk to the borders of the Nile Delta, landing-grounds were evacuated before the advancing Panzers—but each one was used up to the last minute: in one case the enemy was only 12 miles away when the last R.A.F. lorry pulled out. One Boston bomber which could not be flown was towed along the Trigh Capuzzo! The fighter pilots, in particular, covered themselves with glory during the difficult days of the big retreat; some of them had not shaved for a week, so continuously were they flying in support of the land forces!

On left—**URGENT REPAIRS TO THE RADIO SET OF A BRITISH TANK**—*Drawing by Roland Davies*

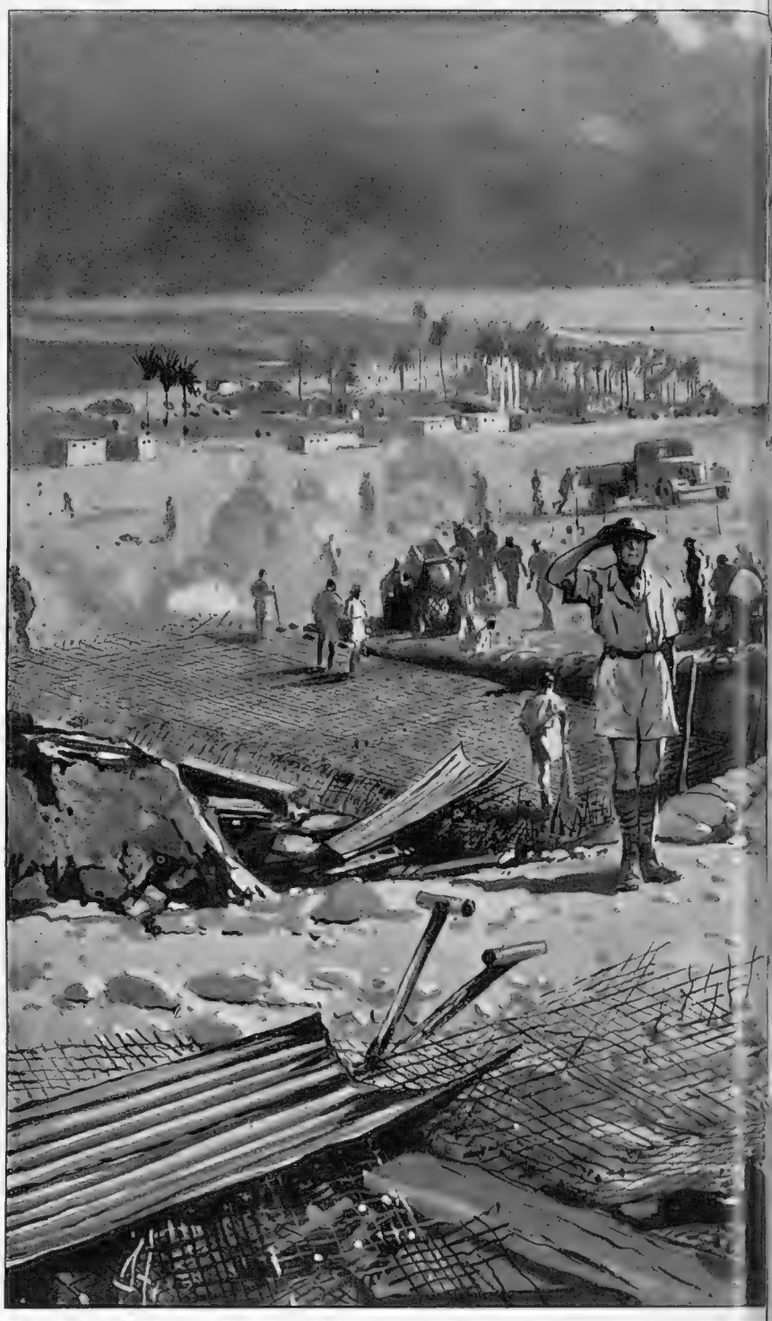
The control of tank formations in the desert is entirely by radio: consequently, the loss of reception by a tank crew can be a very serious matter during a strung-out battle. In this case, whilst repairs were being made to the portable radio set, the tank commander noticed a sandstorm rapidly approaching—so that the set had to be stowed back in the vehicle and the repair work suspended to face the new menace

The Fighting in Egypt

ROMMEL'S EASTWARD DASH CHECKED

GERMAN PRISONERS BEING GIVEN WATER as they come in to a forward P.O.W. camp in the desert. This is usually their first, and their most urgent, need

THE EGYPTIAN ARMY : Though small, it is good, with equipment which has been immensely modernised of late years. Here an anti-aircraft gun is manned by its Egyptian crew in a sandbagged emplacement in the desert hills



MAKING A BRITISH GUN EMPLACEMENT IN THE DESERT : The Royal Engineers have dug into the desert sand, and are laying a bed of reinforced concrete below the level of the surrounding plain. The scene here is typical of many such palm-fringed desert oases near the Mediterranean coastline in Egypt, where previously prepared positions were occupied by the Eighth Army and where heavy fighting has been taking place

HOW AUCHINLECK CHECKED ROMMEL'S RUSH TOWARDS ALEXANDRIA : A war correspondent witnesses the High Command at work during the vital days when defence work was being carried out behind the lines whilst the supply columns went rumbling up to the Alamein front in ceaseless procession—*Drawing by E. Byatt*

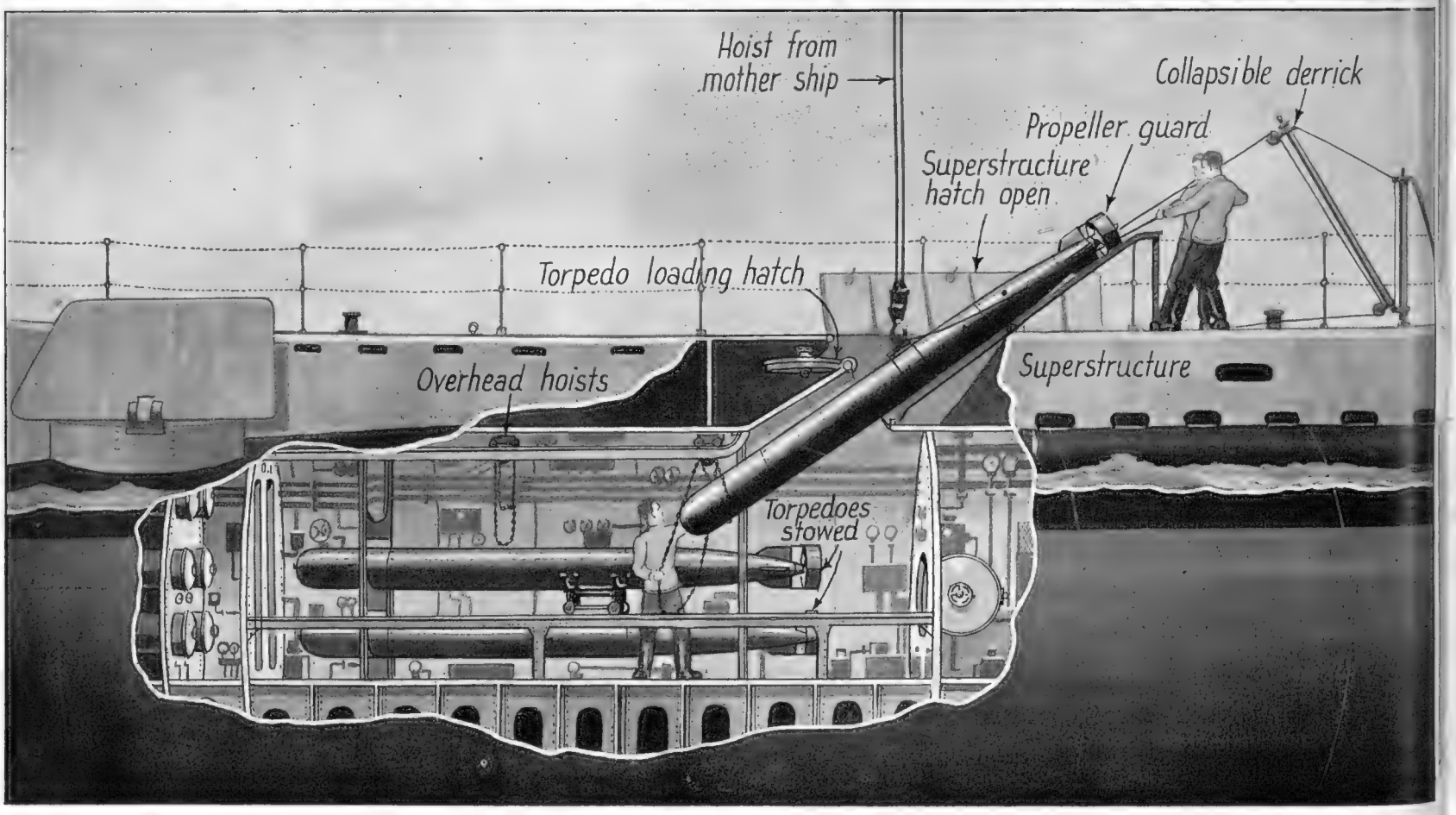
The scene depicted in this drawing has been described by a war correspondent in the following words, written during the dark days when Rommel was rushing headlong through Egypt : "Along the roads behind the battle areas, troops are moving up in a great stream. To drive along the desert road to Alexandria is a fantastic experience. In lines three deep, bumper to bumper, transports are on the move, Staff cars and lorries jammed with men and supplies. Yesterday, those who saw General Auchinleck found him calm, cool, and collected—a wonderful example of British sangfroid. He hopped from his staff car with junior generals and brigadiers, and stopped for a moment to watch the lorries being loaded in El Daba with supplies for transport down the line. A few hundred yards away the minaret of a mosque danced drunkenly in the afternoon mirage, and buildings beyond swayed in the shimmering heat. No one seemed unduly perturbed. Presently Sir Claude Auchinleck climbed back into his car and sped swiftly southwards into the main battle area. He got a smart salute from the men as he left, and then, loading completed, the convoy smoothly moved off—fifteen minutes ahead of the spearhead of Nazi troops." At the same time, and in the same area, defence work was going ahead at top speed—defences being strengthened, strong points being erected, emplacements being built. . . After days of anxiety and the heaviest fighting, the enemy was halted at the Alamein line

ACCREDITED WAR CORRESPONDENTS, representing famous newspapers and Services from all over the world, are attached to the Middle East forces. They are conducted around the battlefront by British Army officers. *On the right,* **Alexander Clifford (of the "Daily Mail") and Alan Moorehead (of the "Daily Express") are seen preparing to move off after spending a night in the desert.** *Above,* **a group of war correspondents are talking to an Italian flying officer who had just been shot down**

THE SUB-MARINERS OF THE ROYAL NAVY

TEA IN THE WARDROOM OF A SUBMARINE: Space may be limited, but a few of the comforts of home have been included, including a table-cloth, pictures on the wall, books—and an art lampshade!

HOW THE MEN FARE ON BOARD A SUBMARINE: This is one of the messrooms, the sleeping bunks in which can be hoisted out of the way. The complement ranges from the sixty of the Severn class down to the twenty-two of the H class



SETTING OUT "TO DO HIS STUFF": The young submarine commander is given a cheery send-off by the "veterans" of thirty or so—the sub. commander of to-day is usually a man in the twenties! The scene is beside a submarine mother-ship in harbour—*Drawing by Edward Osmond*

The work of the Submarine Service is not the most publicised in the Royal Navy! Yet, for nearly three years, British submarines have been sinking Axis vessels at the rate of two a week; and this despite the fact that enemy shipping can now only operate in what may be termed "home waters." The difficulties of the attacker have so multiplied that, not only are submarine casualties growing higher (as recent Admiralty communiqués have indicated), but the increased stress of under-water warfare has brought down the age of the men engaged on it. To-day, there are few submarine commanders above the age of thirty or so: when this ripe old age is reached, officers are usually transferred to shore jobs, and there is little chance of them being given another active-service commission in submarines.

In a recent description of life at a British submarine depot, an eye-witness described the scene which Mr. Osmond has depicted in the drawing *above*. "I saw two of our submarines leaving recently on their hazardous tasks," he wrote. "Both had new commanders and they were seen off by a number of famous veterans (aged thirty or so). The latter tried not to be too paternal as they cast critical eyes over the boats. When the moment of starting came they shook hands with the new fighting commanders and said with apparent casualness: 'Well, do your stuff!'"

How well that "stuff" *is* done is amply demonstrated by the recent achievements of the men of the British Submarine Service!

HOW A SUB-MARINER EMERGES THROUGH THE ESCAPE HATCH IN THE EVENT OF DISASTER: A picture taken during practice with the wonderful Davis escape apparatus. By this means the escaping sailor is shot up to the surface without allowing the submarine to become flooded with water

On left—**HOW THE LONG TORPEDOES ARE LOADED IN A BRITISH SUBMARINE:** This is a part of submarine maintenance which very few people see. The torpedoes are taken on board from the mother ship which is lying alongside. The crews of this vessel lower the torpedoes down to the submarine hatch which is situated forward: here they are slid down an inclined rail right into the torpedo compartment, where the torpedo hoist takes over and stows them in racks. The detonators are, of course, removed during this delicate operation of transference

The MALTA CONVOY FIGHTS ITS WAY THROUGH, June 14–16

THE CONVOY EN ROUTE FOR MALTA FROM THE WEST: A general impression of the vessels under way

The passage of the British convoy from the west to Malta on June 14-16 was under the command of Vice-Admiral Curteis. It was sighted and shadowed by enemy aircraft before it reached the Sardinia-North Africa Channel; and from then onwards it was subjected to very violent Axis air attacks. Despite these, however, and despite the threat of attack by two enemy cruisers and four destroyers (which were driven off), the convoy was able to reach its destination—although with serious losses—in the early hours of June 16. Forty-three enemy planes were destroyed for certain, with twenty-two more "probables"; many others were damaged by anti-aircraft fire from convoy and escorts, and by naval aircraft. Attacks were also made on the enemy cruisers and destroyers by our aeroplanes, and a large enemy destroyer was seen to be hit by torpedoes both forward and aft, and to suffer a violent explosion amidships. The official pictures reproduced here were released for publication by the Admiralty a few days ago

THE ESCORTING BRITISH WARSHIPS LAY A SMOKE SCREEN WHILST THE ACTION IS AT ITS HEIGHT: Despite the presence of enemy vessels, these did not venture to join in the battle, but later they were bombed by our own naval aircraft to good effect

A STICK OF BOMBS DROPPED BY THE ENEMY AHEAD OF A BRITISH BATTLESHIP: For two days the attacks on the convoy were maintained by Axis aircraft, but despite losses, the merchantmen were able to force a way through to their destination at Malta

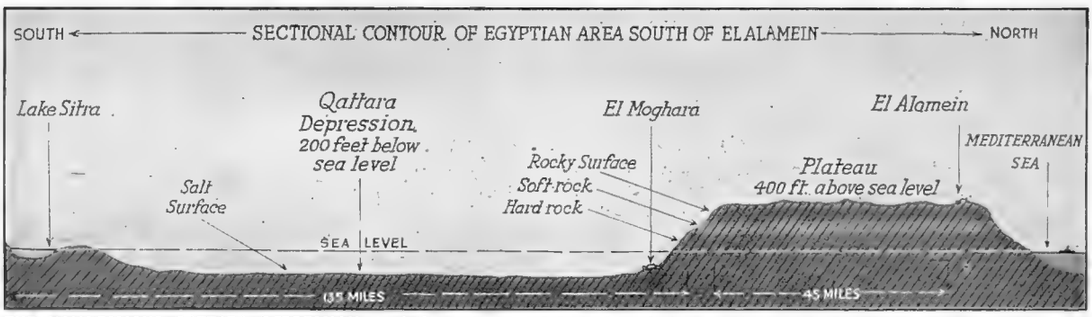
THIS PICTURE SHOWS THE ANTI-AIRCRAFT BARRAGE PUT UP BY A BRITISH BATTLESHIP : On the left may be seen the column of smoke from an Italian bomber which was shot down in the sea

DURING THE HEAVY AIR ATTACKS : One of the British vessels fights its way through, despite the severity of the bombardment from above. Note the bomb-bursts at the left of the picture

HOW THE GALLANT FREIGHTERS PLOUGHED THEIR WAY THROUGH TO MALTA : A stick of bombs has just exploded to the right, but the merchantmen are steaming resolutely ahead. Forty-three of the attackers were destroyed, and another twenty-two were "probables"

The BRITISH FLEET in the MEDITERRANEAN: And the Possible Naval Bases

A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE FAMOUS NAVAL BASE AT ALEXANDRIA which the Mediterranean Fleet has occupied for three years: it is here also that the Vichy ships under Admiral Godefroy have been interned since June 1940 under the shelter of the big Western breakwater—*Drawing by E. G. Lambert*



THE NOW-FAMOUS QATTARA DEPRESSION, and how depressed it is in relation to the nearby Mediterranean Sea. Actually the marshy stretches are some 200 ft. below sea-level: they are bounded on the north by a plateau 400 ft. above sea-level

When it became apparent that Rommel's eastern drive through Egypt had Alexandria as its immediate objective, concern was expressed as to the fate of the Mediterranean Fleet. Since the outbreak of the war, Alexandria has been a principal base in the great Inland Sea; since Italy's entry into the war, the principal one. The city dates back to very early times: it was founded in 331 B.C. by Alexander the Great, and ever since has been intimately bound up with the history of the Middle East. From a naval point of view, its position and its facilities are alike ideal: its two spacious harbours allow accommodation for all types of warships and merchantmen, and its dock facilities permit of the quick performance of necessary repairs. In the Western Harbour lie the vessels of the French Fleet interned after the fall of France in June 1940.

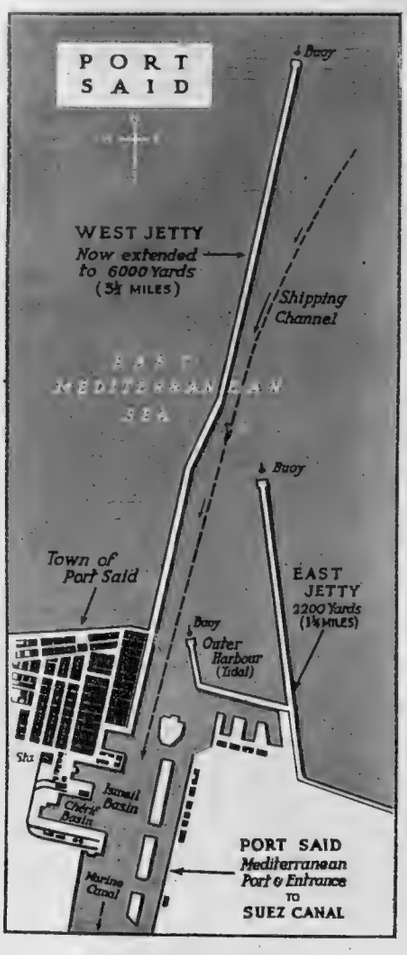
THE TWO HARBOURS AT ALEXANDRIA AS SEEN FROM THE AIR: The big bowl to the top left is the Eastern Harbour; across the narrow neck of land is the Western Harbour, where the Vichy Fleet now lies. The great Breakwater lies to the bottom right, just outside the picture

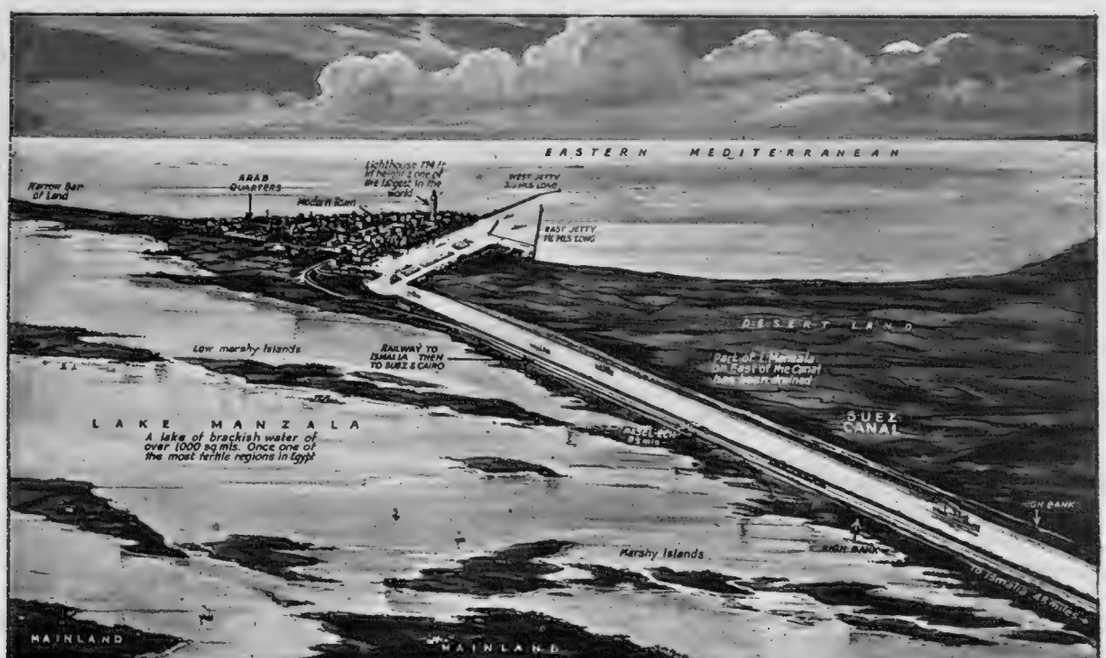
THE GREAT EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN PORT OF HAIFA, to which the Fleet might retire if it had to evacuate its present base at Alexandria. Haifa lies in the historic Bay of Acre under Mount Carmel and is the best natural haven in Palestine

If Alexandria were to be seriously threatened from the land, the Mediterranean Fleet might make Haifa its chief base. This is a new and very fast-growing port, the best in Palestine, with good anchorages for the big vessels of the Royal Navy. During the Great War, Haifa was occupied by the British (together with historic Acre) in September 1918: since then it has become of increasing importance. When the Harbour Construction Scheme was launched a few years ago, it was then stated that Haifa would soon become "one of the first naval and commercial ports of the Near East." Its population, ten years ago, was in the neighbourhood of 25,000; but to-day the figure is undoubtedly much higher.

THE WATERFRONT AT PORT SAID (once known as the "wickedest place on earth"): A view taken from the entrance to the Suez Canal, showing the anchorages of the harbour

Port Said is the third of the great ports of the Eastern Mediterranean: its layout and harbour facilities are shown in the two drawings *below*. The harbour occupies an area of 575 acres and has been excavated to a depth of 42 ft. by means of laborious dredging. It is protected by two massive piers—the West Breakwater, which is about 6,000 yards (3½ miles) in length; and the East Breakwater, now about 2,200 yards (1¼ miles) long. The former protects the harbour from the mud deposits of the Nile. The lighthouse is amongst the largest in the world. Lying as it does at the entrance to the Canal, Port Said has a very great strategic value indeed





ANOTHER STRATEGIC HARBOUR IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN: Port Said, at the northern end of the Suez Canal, with its terrifically long West Jetty, behind which a whole fleet might shelter—*Drawing by E. G. Lambert*

On the left **is a detailed plan of the harbour, jetties and basins at Port Said**

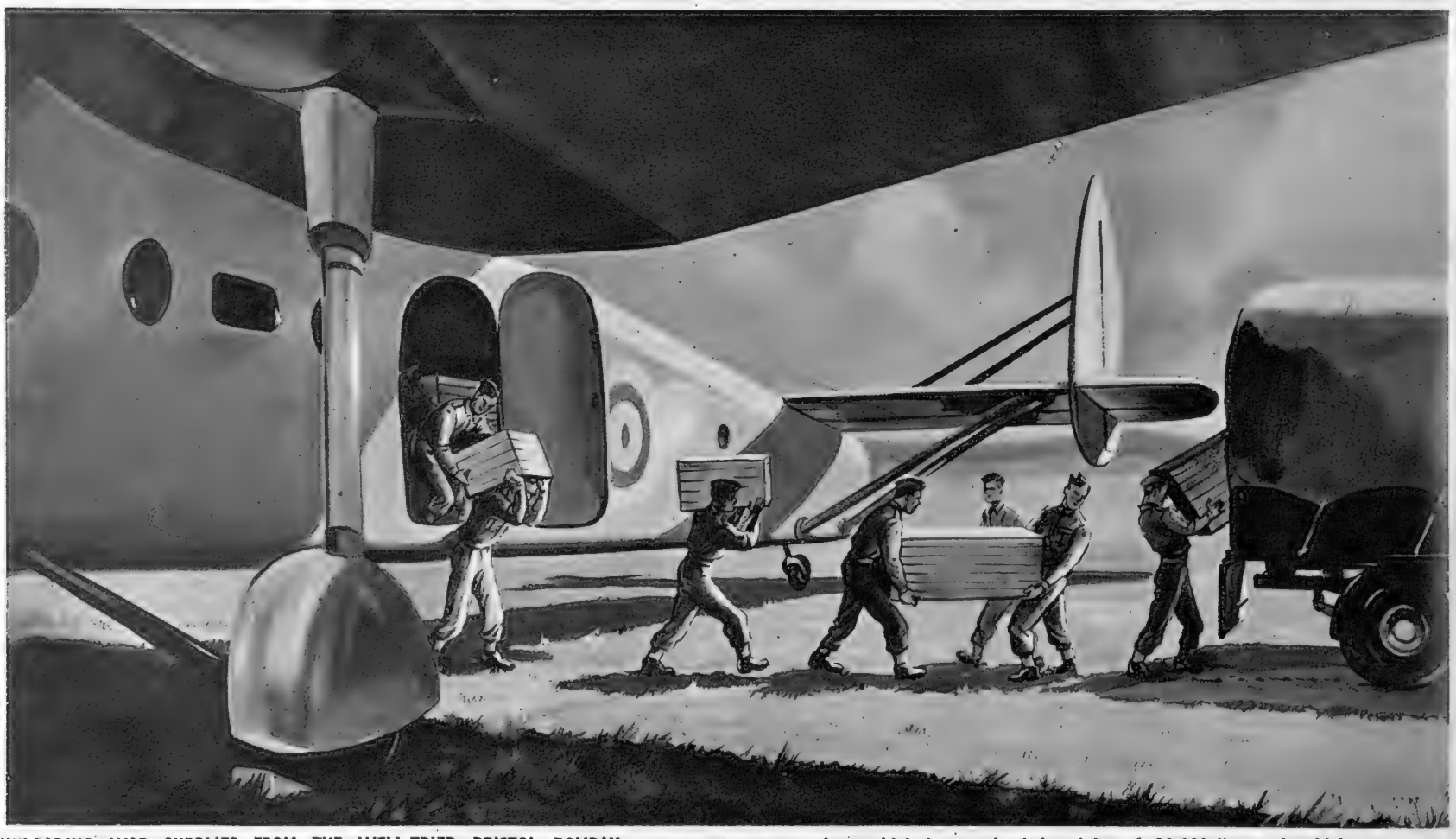
THE HERTFORDSHIRE (known in peacetime as the de Havilland Flamingo), a twin-engined aircraft with an excellent performance, which is well suited for troop transport in difficult country

TROOP-CARRYING PLANES

A Type of Aircraft whose Need has been Demonstrated by Recent Events in Libya

—Drawings of our two chief troop-carriers by Roland Davies

The recent fighting in the Western Desert has once again drawn attention to our need for a larger fleet of troop-carrying aircraft, such as could be used to rush up reinforcements to hard-pressed positions, or fly in badly-needed supplies. The two best-known troop-carriers in service with the R.A.F. to-day are the Bristol Bombay and the de Havilland Hertfordshire. The former is a high-wing monoplane with twin tails, a sturdily built fixed undercarriage, and accommodation for twenty-four fully-equipped soldiers. There are gun-turrets in nose and tail, and the aircraft can be used as a bomber if occasion demands. The loaded weight is 20,000 lb.; the engines are two 1,010-h.p. Bristol Pegasus, which give the Bombay a maximum speed of 192 m.p.h. and a range of 2,230 miles at 160 m.p.h. The de Havilland Hertfordshire was originally produced as a medium-sized commercial transport, with comfortable flying accommodation for twelve to twenty passengers. It was formerly known as the Flamingo. It is a high-wing monoplane with twin tails—like the Bombay. Owing to its good flying qualities, with an excellent single-engine performance (in the event of trouble), the Hertfordshire is well suited for troop-transport work in difficult country. The undercarriage is retractable, and the aircraft as a whole is very markedly streamlined



UNLOADING WAR SUPPLIES FROM THE WELL-TRIED BRISTOL BOMBAY, a troop transport plane which has a loaded weight of 20,000 lb., and which can carry twenty-four fully armed soldiers. These big aircraft have a range of 2,230 miles at a cruising speed of 160 m.p.h.

THE PROCESS OF "DITCHING": How a disabled plane alights on the water: in the stalled position, the tail strikes first, and the nose then hits the water with an impact as if it had struck a stone wall

"DITCHING" A PLANE

How it is Done by a Big Bomber when It Can No Longer be Kept Up in the Air Over the Sea

—Drawings by Roland Davies

There are only two ways in which a pilot or a crew can alight on the sea. Either they can bale out, or the aircraft can be landed on the surface—"ditching," as it is called. The first method is not often used by bomber crews, their aircraft generally keeping afloat for a sufficient time to allow them to take to the dinghy. Pilots of Fighter Command, however, returning from sweeps over Northern France, or from combat around our coasts, frequently find it less dangerous to abandon their aircraft and take to their parachutes than to remain in the aircraft and sustain the very severe shock which is experienced when a fast fighter alights on the sea. Moreover, the Spitfire or the Hurricane, owing to the weight of its engine, almost always sinks immediately.

The shock when an aircraft, be it a fighter or a bomber, strikes the water is tremendous, even though it is landed at the lowest possible speed and in a stalled position, so that the tail is the first part of it to strike the water. "He tried to pancake, but hit a wave, and the machine stopped as though up against a brick wall." "On striking the water he received a head injury, and lost consciousness for a few seconds." "It was like hitting a stone wall. The machine stopped absolutely dead." Such sentences as these are found in almost every report of a landing at sea.

UNLIKE A FIGHTER PLANE, WHICH USUALLY SINKS IMMEDIATELY, a bomber, after a crash-landing on the sea, will generally float for a period of two or three minutes—sufficient time for the crew to clamber out and take to their rubber dinghy

WHAT THE FIGHTING POLES HAVE DONE

Since the Overrunning of Their Own Country the Poles Have Fought Unremittingly by Land, Sea and Air. Here is a Chronicle of Their Great Achievements at the Side of British Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen, in Many Theatres of War

By CHARLES GRAVES

EVERY week we read of the exploits of the Polish Navy, Army and Air Force, particularly the last. Yet when the Germans launched their treacherous attack on Poland on September 1, 1939, they destroyed the aircraft of nearly all the Polish pilots before they could even take the air. In spite of this, most of the Polish Air Force were able to escape, and by February 1940 there were approximately 2,000 Polish airmen in Great Britain.

But it was not until August 5, 1940, that Winston Churchill and General Sikorski signed the Polish-British Military Agreement which defined the principles on which the armed Forces of Poland were to be organised for co-operation with us. This provided for the organisation and employment of Polish Armed Forces under British command in its character as Allied High Command; the Polish Air Force to be reorganised and enlarged by officers and men from France, and to be on the same footing as the R.A.F.; the Polish Army to be organised out of Polish troops in Great Britain and in the Middle East, and completed by a mobilisation of Polish citizens living in the United Kingdom.

The Polish Air Force has grown considerably and deserved all its laurels in the Battle of Britain. Polish airmen's part in this battle was specially mentioned in a message of congratulation on September 16, 1940, from the British Prime Minister to Fighter Command. About 10 per cent. of the German aircraft destroyed in the Battle of Britain are reckoned to have been the victims of Polish fighters. One squadron, No. 303 (a sinister number in view of the calibre of the Browning), formed on August 1, 1940, became operational in a month and shot down more than one hundred German aircraft in September 1940.

From August 1, 1940 to November 15, 1941, Polish fighters had over 1,600 engagements, with 410 enemy machines destroyed for certain, and a further 108 probables, while 52 were damaged. Polish bombers made 258 operational flights with 1,116 machines. Chief targets were Berlin, Hamburg, Kiel, Bremen, Essen, Mannheim, Frankfurt a/Main, Emden, Hanover, Osnabrueck, Duesseldorf, Rotterdam, Antwerp, Ostend, Dunkirk, Le Havre, Boulogne, Calais, Cherbourg, and Lorient.

The latest figures show that up to June 30, 1942, Polish pilots had shot down 464 German aircraft for certain in this country. This is quite apart from the hundreds of enemy aircraft damaged or probably destroyed.

I must not give the exact number of Polish fighter squadrons now operating against the enemy, but there are at least half a dozen of them. As for the number of bomber squadrons, I can only say that, if you add together the number of their air crews and the number of raids they have made on Germany and Occupied territory, you will get the figure of 2,888. All of them have their own Polish ground crews and Polish-manned barrage balloon units.

The log-book of the first Polish Bomber Squadron (the Mazovian) records the beginning of operational flights in September 1940. The second Bomber Squadron (the Pomeranian) came into action a few weeks later. The oldest plane in the Pilsudski Squadron is T for Tommy. It is nine months old, and there are twenty-four little bombs painted on its side to show how many raids it has made. On four of these bombs is a small red wound-star when T for Tommy was hit by flak. This aircraft has been to Stettin, which is not very far from Poland. "How we wanted to go on!" said the pilot. "One day we shall."

Yes, they will return, but some of them will not go back to Poland. In a peaceful cemetery lie the bodies of 150 Polish airmen killed in action. And the lines of white wooden crosses lengthen month by month. But there are hundreds who do not lie quietly here—those who were shot down over enemy territory or were drowned within sight of the shores of Britain. The Polish Air Force, since it began operations in Britain, has had a thousand casualties, killed, missing, and captured, and one shudders to think what has happened to the last mentioned.

To revert to the Polish Army, the entire Polish Carpathian Brigade took part in the defence of Tobruk from September 5 to December 12, 1941. During this time Polish soldiers, besides defending a sector of the fortress and repulsing enemy attacks, also (1) made four large attacks resulting in the capture of enemy positions and destroying them to a great extent; (2) made about 150 night-fighting patrols; (3) made a night raid from the fortress and captured the important height of Meddauar; and (4) took part in the attack on Bir el Hamid and in the battle of Sidi Rezegh at the beginning of the British offensive on November 18, 1941.

Later the Brigade fought, after leaving Tobruk, at Gazala and Bardia.

In the course of ten months fighting in the Western Desert the Brigade captured much equipment and war material and also took about 2,000 prisoners. In the daring raid on Gazala itself the Poles captured 53 officers and 1,634 other ranks. These successes cost 130 killed and nearly 500 wounded.

Thirty-two soldiers of the Brigade were decorated with the "Virtuti Militari," 744 with the Polish Cross for Gallantry, and about 20 with high British war decorations.

To be exact, there are three concentrations of Polish troops. The first is the Army Corps in Scotland under General Kukiel, who was formerly a History Professor at Cracow. This consists of infantry, mechanised cavalry, and an armoured formation—the remnants of the Polish Army formed in France and evacuated to England. The second concentration consists of Poles who escaped from Poland and through Rumania when France collapsed. They made their way into Palestine with their equipment, and number about 7,000. The third concentration are the 90,000 Polish prisoners of war formed into an army after the Russian Agreement with Sikorski in August last year. Twenty-five thousand of these were allowed to leave Russia for the Middle East in December of last year and had been equipped by Britain and the United States. They have amalgamated with the Carpathian Brigade, and number 32,000 under General Zajac. The rest of the 90,000 remain in Russia near the Caspian Sea under the command of General Anders. Incidentally, it was found that there were too many Polish officers in England and not enough in Russia. As a result, certain of the officers have been sent from England to Russia and to the Middle East to secure the correct proportions.

As for the Polish Navy, which lost another of its destroyers in the Mediterranean a few days ago, the chief of the Polish Naval Staff is Vice-Admiral Sir Jerzy Swirski, K.C.B. Nearly three-quarters of the 26,564 tons of the Polish Navy got out of the Baltic to fight with the Allies. The Polish naval force comprises some dozen units, including submarines, six destroyers, and three smaller fighting vessels. Personnel totals 200 officers and 1,350 men. They have been operating alongside the British Navy since September 3, 1939. The Polish Naval College carries out training in the depot ship. Polish naval cadets are attached to British warships for instruction. Four of them went down with the *Hood* on May 24, 1941.

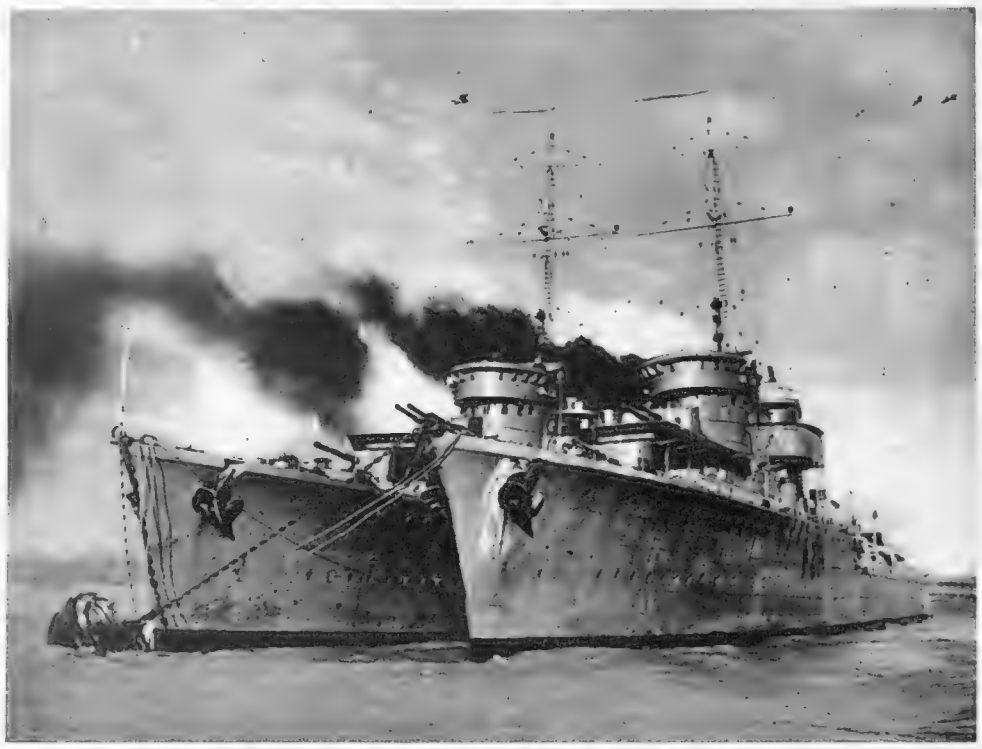
The exploits of the submarine *Orzel*, Commander John Grudzinski, which was subsequently sunk, are well known. The submarine *Wilk* once rammed and sank a German submarine. A new Polish submarine, the *Sokol*, took over the service of the *Orzel*, and in the near future a third Polish submarine will be afloat. The Polish destroyer *Piorun*, Commander Eugeniusz Plawski, was the first of Captain Vian's force to sight the *Bismarck* on the night of May 26, 1941. The *Piorun* closed and actually engaged the *Bismarck* with its 4-in. guns, and by skilful handling escaped damage or casualties from the heavy fire of the *Bismarck's* main and secondary armament. The destroyer *Grom* was lost in action off Narvik in May 1940. In September 1940, the destroyer *Garland* was added to the Polish Navy. Since the end of October 1940, Polish destroyers have been taking part in patrolling and convoying in the North Atlantic.

On September 1, 1939, the Polish Merchant Navy, which was then still in the course of expansion, participating only to the extent of 10 per cent. of Polish overseas transports, comprised 85 ships, amounting to 135,110 G.R.T. In addition, there were nine ships in construction amounting to 20,600 G.R.T. Thanks to dispositions and arrangements made beforehand, and also thanks to the efficiency of Polish crews, all ships which were not commissioned to co-operate in the defence of the coast-line had been directed in good time outside the Baltic. Further, the three ships which at the outbreak of war were left in the Baltic broke through the Sund and joined the rest of the Polish Merchant Fleet in French and British ports. Altogether, some 110,000 G.R.T. were put at the disposal of Great Britain. The Polish Merchant Navy has thus been working under war conditions longer than any other Allied Merchant Fleet.

During the war, the control of Polish Merchant Shipping and Sea Fishing enterprises and general disposition in regard to them is exercised by the Minister of Industry and Commerce, who effects it through the Maritime Department. The Polish Merchant Marine is carrying transports of goods to this country, and is furthermore employed in transporting troops all over the Empire.

All of this only goes to show that the publicity given to Poland in this country before the war was incredibly inferior and misleading. The average Englishman thought of the Poles as either brutal, feudal noblemen who beat the peasantry and were corrupt in every possible way, or as a degraded form of Middle European Jew of mean stature and still meaner morals and standards of living. It is safe to say that every one of us who has met members of the Polish Army, Navy or Air Force has been astonished by their physique and bearing.

P.S.—Only the other day General Sosnkowsky told me that he could speak for all Poles in saying that they would be prepared to learn English if they could join the British Commonwealth of Nations. It would be difficult to have a greater compliment paid to us. We, in turn, now agree that the Poles include some of the toughest sailors, airmen, and soldiers among the whole of the Allied Nations.



TWO OF THE POLISH WARSHIPS WHICH ESCAPED TO BRITAIN: These two destroyers were sister-ships, the "Blyskawica" and the "Grom." The latter was lost on war service in 1940; the former is still serving with the British Navy. Both these fine vessels were completed in 1937, with a displacement of 2,140 tons and a speed of 39 knots

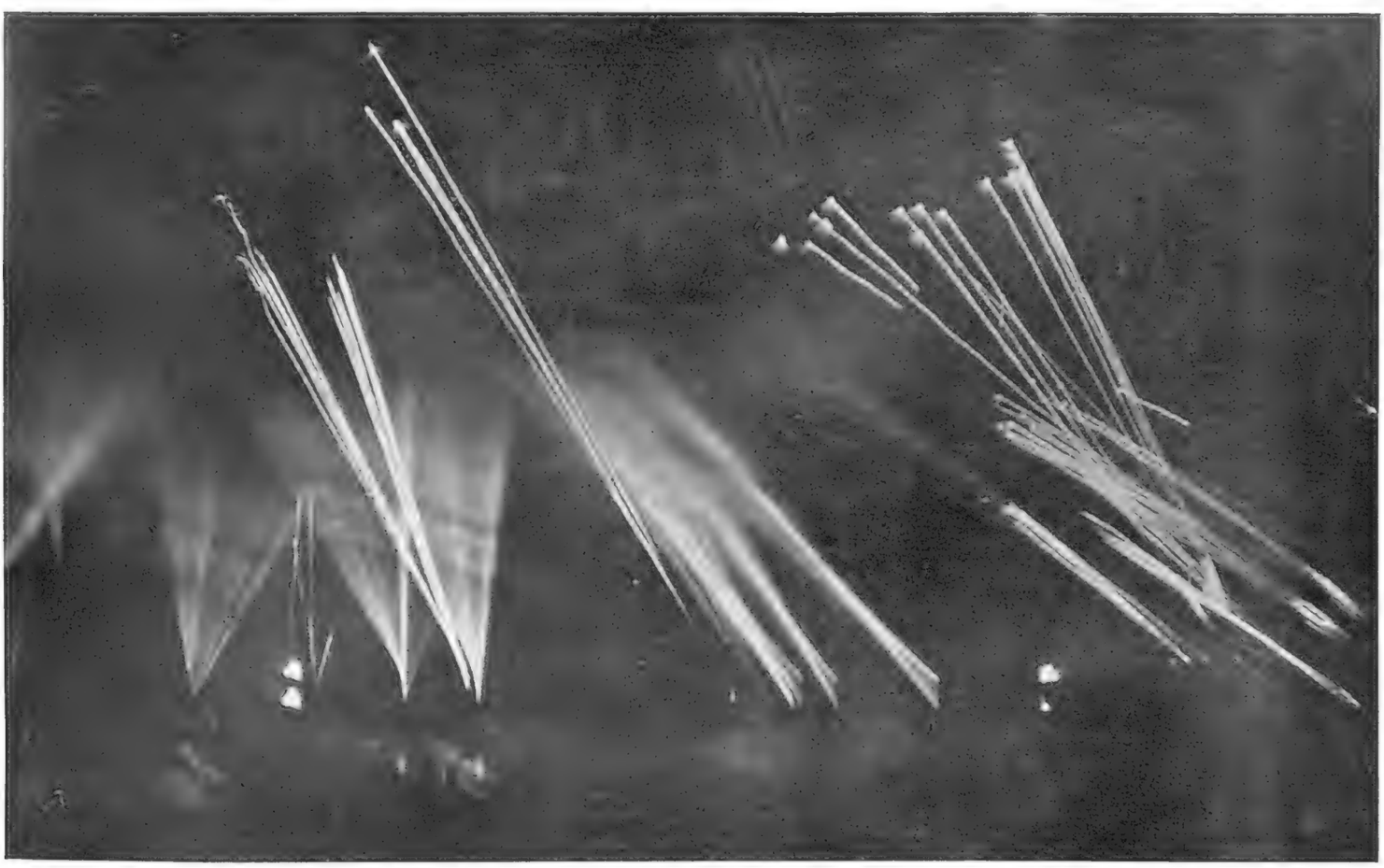
The Shaftesbury Homes and "Arethusa" Training Ship

The Society is constantly hearing of its Old Boys who are making the supreme sacrifice in this great struggle. One such, who received training in the *Arethusa*, was doing great work as skipper, in helping to bring off the people from St. Nazaire, and while engaged in this job of saving life, had his ship blown up. Funds are urgently needed to give boys a sound training. Address: 164, Shaftesbury Avenue, London, W.C.2.

MAKING THE SHELLS FOR THE FAMOUS 25-POUNDER GUNS: The 25-pounder is probably the most effective and useful gun of the war up to date: it has been very widely used in Libya and Egypt, and has earned much praise for the manner in which it has stood up to the most arduous of conditions. Some of the shells for this gun are made in a north-east factory which was once a famous theatre: the girls who make them have been recruited largely from luxury trades and from business houses. As the work of manufacture requires great precision, these girls have been found to be ideal for the job. In the course of one day alone, owing to the many intricacies of assembly, it has been calculated that each girl handles some fourteen tons of steel and brass—a performance which redounds highly to their credit!

The NAVY'S NEW ROCKET GUN

THE NEW ROCKET GUN USED BY THE NAVY: The Admiralty recently announced that one of the most successful devices developed during the war at sea is a rocket apparatus which shoots into the sky parachutes with long wires attached to them. The rockets are fired when enemy aircraft swoop to attack a merchant ship, and unless the pilot swerves off his course instantly his plane becomes entangled in the trailing wires and falls helplessly into the sea. German pilots hate these rockets, which compel them to drop their bombs wide of the ship they are attempting to attack. The picture above was taken whilst soldiers of a British Maritime Regiment were being trained in the use of the Holman Projector—as the new rocket gun is termed



AN IMPRESSIVE PICTURE DURING AN ENEMY AIR ATTACK ON BRITAIN: Searchlights and tracer shells illuminating the night sky over a town on the South Coast, when anti-aircraft defences were in action recently during a raid by German aircraft

LEADERS in the ALLIED WAR EFFORT

AN AMERICAN GENERAL AT WORK WITH HIS STAFF IN THIS COUNTRY: Lieut.-General Dwight Eisenhower is the Commander of the U.S. Army Forces in Europe; he was only recently promoted to his present rank by the President. Above he is seen with two members of his personal staff—Lieut.-Com. Harry C. Butcher and Captain Ernest R. Lee

LORD HALIFAX RETURNS TO LONDON: The British Ambassador to Washington, who recently arrived for consultations with the War Cabinet, is here seen on his way to the Foreign Office. Lord and Lady Halifax returned to Britain by air

"THE OWNER" ARRIVES IN BRITAIN after a flight across the Atlantic by bomber

"The Owner" is Air Chief Marshal Sir Frederick Bowhill, formerly C.-in-C. of Coastal Command and now in charge of Ferry Command. He is seen in the centre of the little group above just after he had flown the Atlantic by bomber to inspect this end of his important Command. When the history of the war comes to be written, the Ferry Command will rank among the few real successes—with its triumphs of leadership and brilliant organisation, its record of achievement against all kinds of odds. It was created about a year ago: Sir Frederick Bowhill left Coastal Command to take it over and brought his best experience to bear on the new organisation. Dorval Airport at Montreal, its headquarters, is now regarded as the most perfect of its kind in the world. The bombers are flown there from U.S. factories: the line of delivery to Britain is by way of Newfoundland, where another unique aerodrome has been created

WON THE D.F.C. TWICE IN FIVE WEEKS: The ace Czech pilot, Flight Lieut. Karel Kuttelwascher, now serving with the R.A.F. as a night fighter, has been awarded a Bar to his D.F.C. Both were won in five weeks—a record for any pilot in this war. "Kut," who has brought down twenty-two enemy aircraft, specialises in waiting over enemy airfields to pounce on German aircraft returning from bombing attacks on Britain. In this way he has accounted for sixteen

NEWS ITEMS OF HOME INTEREST

QUEEN MARY MAKES A PUBLIC REAPPEARANCE: Inspecting 1,500 Air Cadets—boys and girls—at Bristol in the West Country. Later her Majesty was served with tea and cakes from a Y.M.C.A. tea car

THE DUKE OF KENT BROADCASTS TO NORTH AMERICA: A picture taken in the B.B.C. studio just before the Duke made his recent broadcast (which was re-broadcast by the Mutual Network in the U.S.A.). With him are—left to right—Sergeant Francis Bohannan, of Philadelphia; Stanley Maxted, B.B.C. Producer of "Stars and Stripes in Britain"; Private First-Class John C. Keller (U.S. Marines), of Philadelphia; and Chief Yeoman Howard Ashenfalter (U.S. Navy), of Lakehurst

WHEN A PACK TRANSPORT COMPANY GOES OUT FOR MANŒUVRES in the Welsh mountains, a Y.M.C.A. tea car usually follows. It parks at the nearest available spot to serve tea to the men who spend hours up in the mountains

A RACECOURSE IS NOW A HOSPITAL FOR ARMY HORSES: How the O.C. makes his business calls—by trap, to save petrol. It will probably come as a surprise to many to know that, so far is the Army from being entirely mechanised, it uses horses and mules to an extent which requires the maintenance of its own veterinary hospitals. Such units as Mountain Batteries and Pack Transport companies require animals in the best of condition, and when sick or injured they have to be sent to hospital for treatment by a staff of qualified veterinarians

BRITAIN IS STILL SUPPLYING RUSSIA WITH TANKS: Two scenes at a British port showing the shipment of "Matildas" to the Eastern Front

While British and Dominion armoured units are receiving tanks from the United States, ships loaded with British tanks for Russia leave one after the other for the Arctic. British workers may thus feel satisfied that the results of their labours are already playing a direct part in the defeat of the Axis. The two pictures above portray daily scenes at a certain British port, to which tanks roll from the assembly lines on the start of their long journey to the battlefields of the East by way of the Northern route

The World of Books—By Vernon Fane

NEW NOVELS AND GHOSTLY VISITATIONS

Mr. Thomas Armstrong—Man of Kent and Yorkshire; Miss Angela Du Maurier's Cornish Tragedy; A Japanese Story of Greed and Cruelty; The Saga of an American Family; Ghosts and Nazis at One's Heels!

MR. THOMAS ARMSTRONG wrote an impressive first novel, covering several generations of a Yorkshire mill-owning family, and so faithful was the atmosphere and the detail that I, for one, was ready to accord him a place in the not unimpressive list of Yorkshire writers. Having finished DOVER HARBOUR (Collins. 10s. 6d.), and noted the meticulous and almost loving detail with which he describes not only the country which lies between the South Foreland and Romney Marsh, but every sand-bar and almost every current which flows between there and Gris-Nez, I am wondering why I mistook Mr. Armstrong for anybody but a Man of Kent.

Few who are not such Men would, for instance, be on easy, intimate terms with the inhabitants and harbour of Boulogne. In reality this book is what it says it is, a novel about Dover Harbour. The action takes place between 1789 and 1809. There was, of course, an invader encamped on the heights of Boulogne. Not so historically important, but just as sinister at the time, there were prejudices and vested interests entrenched between Shakespeare's Cliff and St. Margaret's Bay.

The story is of a struggle between a stubborn, genial, law-breaking shipowner, who wanted to develop the harbour, and an autocratic, hard-featured banker, who cared nothing for progress as long as he could play local prejudices and interests to his own advantage. It helps the story along, of course, that a son and daughter of each of these families should be in love. That the son should also be doing a spot of espionage for Mr. Pitt, and thus be suspect on both sides of the Channel, also helps to add spice of action and adventure to the tale.

There are plenty of other convincing and picturesque characters who form the right background for a story of human clashes in a period of development. Mr. Armstrong has the mature touch of a practised novelist, and if this is only his second book he is certainly to be congratulated upon so solid an achievement.

The Cornwall that Miss Angela du Maurier conjures up in TREVERYAN (Michael Joseph. 9s. 6d.) is an unfamiliar place, and not only because it is the Cornwall of forty years ago or more. There are no wreckers or rock-bound coasts, or, at the other extreme, any clotted cream about this tale of an old family mansion which might have had as dignified and gloomy a setting in any of the shires.

In the great house of Treveryan lives a family doomed to tragedy by a strain of madness which they believe to be hereditary. The fact that none of them do, in fact, inherit it makes their fates all the more tragic, since that proof comes too late in their wasted lives for solace. Each of them knows a glimpse of happiness and an ordered life, and, generally by violent means, each of them loses it.

Miss du Maurier writes as a romantic, whose touch is surest in situations that call for abnegation and all-round sacrifice and misery. She is less convincing in the portrayal of requited love, and the reader has an uneasy feeling that each happy interlude is the preface to some dark and hopeless deed. This, as can be imagined, is hardly the recipe for an engaging novel, though it could have resulted in an absorbing one.

The activities of the Black Dragon Society, about which I was reading in the most prosaic and factual of newspapers the other day, chime in, with almost startling relevance, with Mr. Robert Standish's novel, THE THREE BAMBOOS (Peter Davies. 9s. 6d.), in which a family of Japanese merchant princes identify themselves, in power and unscrupulous ambition, with the fortunes of their country.

They are shown as a symbol of Japan's development, of its Westernisation and of its utter ruthlessness in attempting to attain its objects. The Fureno family, more powerful than their Emperor, and richer than any of their rivals, had world-wide interests and world-wide ambitions. Their industries and banks and shipping lines were the foundations of their strength, but, with the expansion that each generation brought to these, there came also a more consuming and more insatiable desire.

The Furenos were behind the Korean campaign, behind the traffic of more deadly drugs than opium in China, behind the new shipbuilding methods, behind the pleasant social contacts with the great in England and America and Germany. When the deadly Society of the Little Flowers was formed there was little doubt about its direction.

An Urgent Reminder

SAVE WASTE PAPER

It is a Munition of War, and a very valuable one

All this is fiction, as are the hates and loves of the Furenos; but it is excellent fiction, and a little too credible for comfort. Mr. Standish must know the history and character of Nippon better than most, and in this connection his dedication is interesting, since it is "to the gentle, self-effacing and long-suffering mothers of the cruellest, most arrogant and treacherous sons who walk this earth—to the women of Japan—who will, as always, reap the richest harvest of suffering as their reward."

I wish I had, in honesty, more enthusiastic praise for DISTINGUISHED VISITORS (Eldon. 8s.), which just misses being really entertaining, and never passes the standard, commendable in itself, of competence and readability. It is an American novel, by Miss Lenore Glen Offord, and it has as a setting that part of California that has never heard of Hollywood—an ordinary, sane, workaday town, and an ordinary, sane household in it.

But the household is disrupted by some exotic and penniless guests which it is hardly geared to receive, and then and there a great readjustment starts. This could be matter for entertainment, certainly for satire of a kind, but it stops short of that and only attains a rather determined sort of wholesomeness: reason, not necessarily sweet, but undeniably hygienic. And just a little dull.

The writer makes her points; family good sense and family good humour will prevail over any amount of extraneous malice and intrigue, and all will be for the best in the best of all possible sagas. But there are stretches, none the less, that might without overstatement be called monochrome, and that are only relieved at insufficient intervals by Miss Offord's really charming descriptions of children.

Miss D. K. Broster's ghost stories, CROUCHING AT THE DOOR (Heinemann. 6s.), are, I think, a new venture with her, and from the reader's point of view a most interesting one, although only one of them seemed to me to have the authentic effect that such tales should have—the slight prickling of the scalp and the rather self-conscious nonchalance of that look round the room to make sure one's quite alone, after all!

The title-story comes nearest to fulfilling these requirements to this (possibly captious) reader, and there is an echo, but no more, of that eeriness in a story about a Roman pavement. All the stories, however, are well told, and would probably be far more hair-raising if they were read in the traditional setting of a flickering fire, and a windy winter's night.

Mr. David Walker was correspondent of the *Daily Mirror*, and was in Bucharest both before and after the outbreak of war. DEATH AT MY HEELS (Chapman and Hall. 10s.) is a factual, personal and at times exciting account of the prelude to and the actual invasion of Eastern Europe by the Germans.

It may seem trivial at this moment to recall the world's excitement over Carol and Madame Lupescu; certainly it is a shock now to see a reproduction of a picture of the bloody heap of bodies of Calinescu's murderers left there for crowds to look at.

Mr. Walker writes easily, authoritatively and with the pen of a good journalist, of those seemingly far-off days when the world still didn't appear to know what Hitler was up to. Incidentally, he produces an interesting and, to me, quite original series of portraits of Carol, his son Michael and the notorious Lupescu.

When the period of infiltration was over, and the Nazi invasion began in earnest, Mr. Walker was a jump ahead of death, in various gruesome forms, in Sofia, in Belgrade and in Greece. Mr. Robert St. John, an American correspondent, has recently published a book on this comparatively-neglected theatre of war. There is no comparison between the two, but, from the point of view of vividness and objective reporting, *Death at My Heels* is the book for my money.

NOTE.—On this page, in the issue of July 4, we published an appreciative review of Mr. J. B. Priestley's new book, *Black-Out in Gretley* (Heinemann). Unfortunately, this will not be available for sale until August 10. To those readers who have already attempted to secure copies without success, we tender our apologies for a slip caused by premature enthusiasm!

NEW LONDON PLAYS

Reviewed by PHILIP PAGE

Macbeth (Piccadilly).—Although the excellent Shakespearean productions of Mr. Donald Wolfit during the early part of the war (*and* during the "Blitz") should be gratefully remembered, the appearance of Mr. John Gielgud as Macbeth is an event of outstanding importance.

On the whole, the revival is on the confidential side, this particularly applying to Mr. William Walton's specially compressed incidental music, which was left to the uncertainty of *pianissimo* gramophone records. But Mr. Gielgud himself was an occasional offender, mostly when it came to dealing with the glorious poetical passages of this grim tragedy. It is true that these passages are familiar to most of us. But I do not consider this sufficient reason for not, to put it non-poetically, spitting 'em out. In other respects Mr. Gielgud gave the performance one expects from this fine actor—vigorous and most goodly to look upon.

Miss Gwen Ffrangçon Davies seemed either to have been miscast as Lady Macbeth, or to have misconstrued the character entirely. She stated before the production that she entirely disagreed with the heavy-matronly conception of the part, founded by Mrs. Siddons, and widely followed ever since. I do not know the weight of Mrs. Siddons, but I do know that she played the part at twenty-nine, and that reference-books give Miss Ffrangçon Davies's age as somewhat older. Dame Madge Kendal played Lady Macbeth at fourteen, with Phelps. Perfect performances came from Mr. Francis Lister (Macduff) and Mr. Nicholas Hannen (Duncan), and, as usual, Mr. Sofaer was very good.

THE GILBERT AND SULLIVAN OPERA SEASON AT PRINCES THEATRE: The London season of the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company at Princes Theatre has been proving a great success. The company has been singing and acting with even more than their customary vivacity. The quality of crystal clarity which marks these productions was never more evident—this finished, polished note is particularly welcome in wartime. It was this quality, it will be remembered, which gave the operas such a phenomenal success in the United States. All the chief favourite operas are being given in a season which promises to last far into August. Those delightful operas, *The Pirates of Penzance* and *Trial by Jury*, have provided delicious evenings. Helen Roberts and John Dean are here seen in the leading parts of *The Pirates of Penzance*, Act I

Lifeline (Duchess).—This play has been described as a sort of *Journey's End* of the present war, with the sea instead of the front-line trenches as its scene. It is nothing of the sort. *Journey's End* was a carefully-constructed play, with many tense, dramatic moments. This is little more than a series of long conversations interrupted by loud explosions. However, the conversations are well worth listening to (the explosions *have* to be listened to), and if the story of a merchant-ship crossing the Atlantic amid perils innumerable can rub in the debt we owe to our gallant sailors, it will be more than justified. The acting, notably that of Mr. Wilfrid Lawson, Mr. Wally Patch and Mr. Frank Pettingell, is on a brilliantly high level.

All's Fair! (Whitehall).—When the official description of a show is, as in this case, "a spectacular glamour revue," one expects something peculiarly luscious. This I did not find, but I did enjoy some good music-hall "turns"—Mr. Freddie Forbes, a really funny comedian; Mr. Pat Obrien, a musician; and Mr. Frank Wilson, "The Australian Sundowner." Contributions also came from Mr. Bon Blott, Charles and Partner, Miss Phyllis Dixey and Mr. Jack Tracey.

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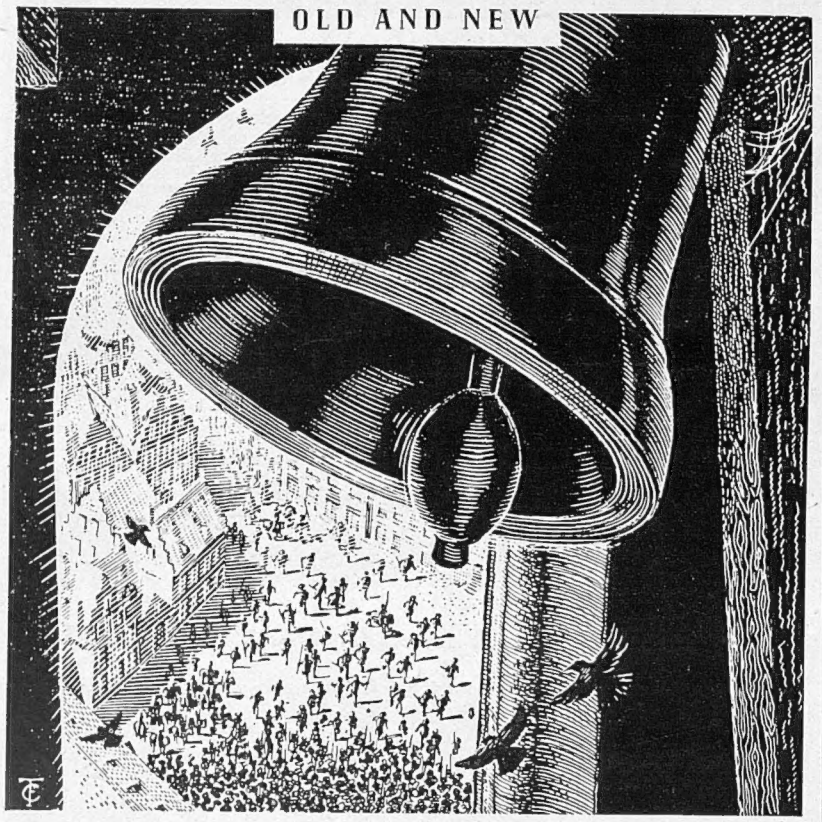

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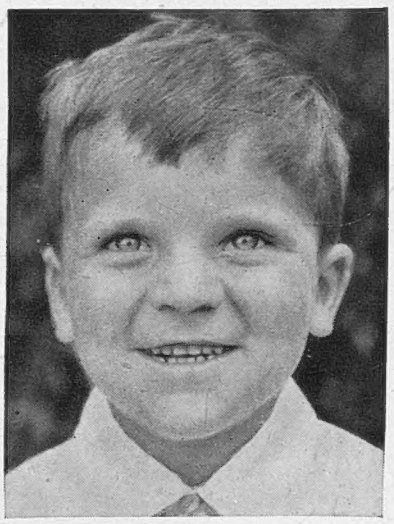

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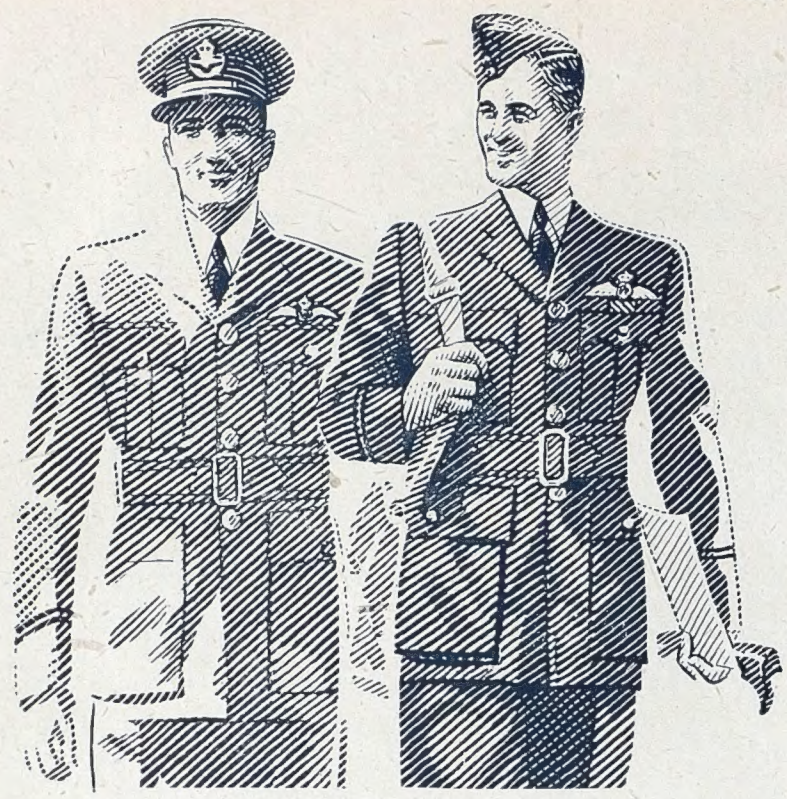

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